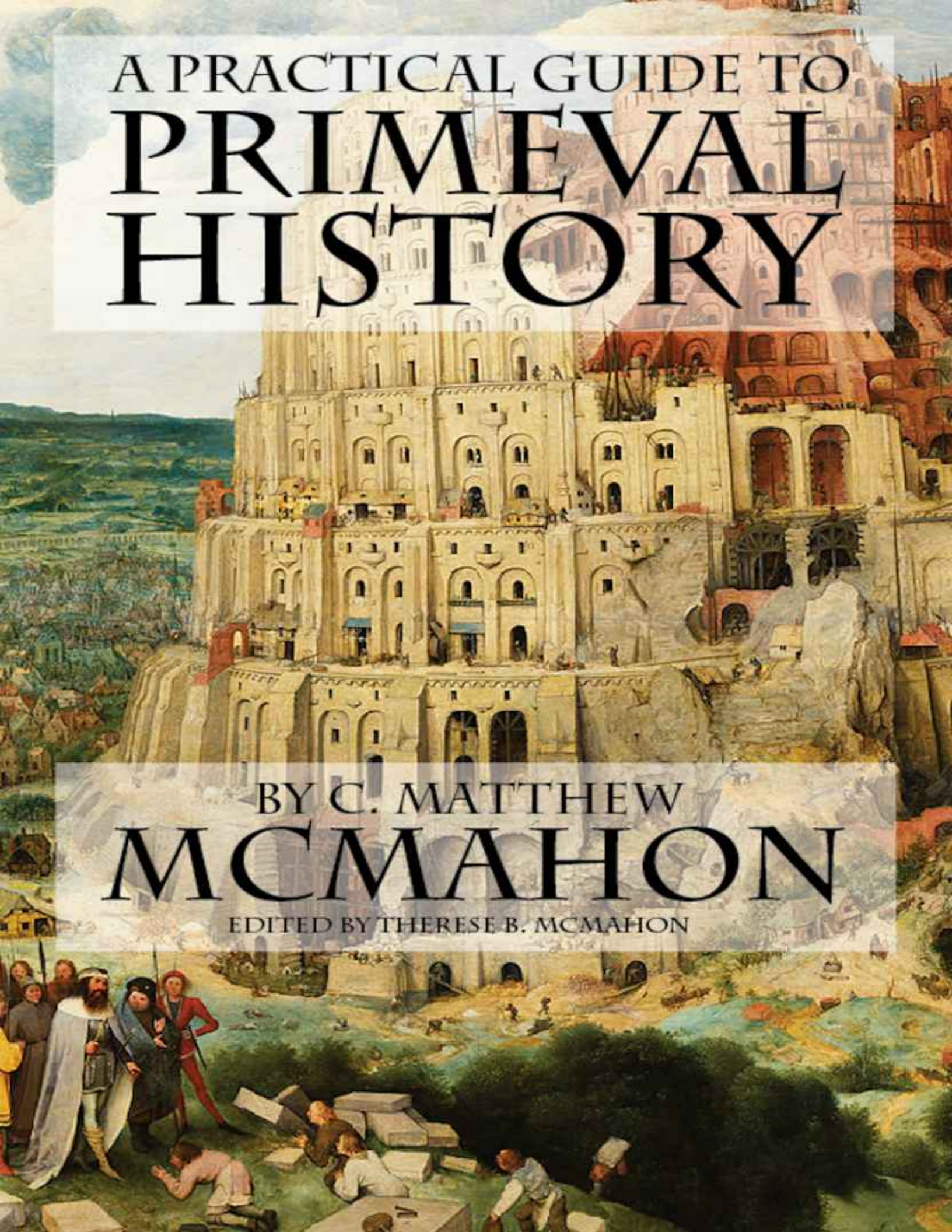
A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO PRIMEVAL HISTORY



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Published by Puritan Publications
A Ministry of A Puritan's Mind in Crossville, TN
www.apuritansmind.com
www.puritanpublications.com
www.puritanshop.com

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First Electronic Edition, 2016
First Modern Print Edition, 2016
Manufactured in the United States of America

eISBN: 978-1-62663-170-0
ISBN: 978-1-62663-169-4

Cover Art - *The Tower of Babel* by Pieter Bruegel the Elder (1563).

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INTRODUCTION

When theologians and pastors refer to Genesis, or for that matter, any part of the Bible, as “stories”, I shudder a bit. I used to do it myself, unknowingly retracting from the grace of the book. If the creation event is, “just a story,” and the Garden of Eden is, “just a story,” and the fall of Adam is, “just a story,” then the Bible is no better than *Aesop’s Fables*. If Adam is not a real person, then Noah is not a real person, then Abraham is not a real person, and Moses is not a real person, and David is not a real person, and….Jesus Christ is equally a fabled story as well. When unbelievers hear preachers and theologians talk about the, “stories of the bible,” they are thinking about them as fables. No, the Bible is a *historical narrative*. One cannot believe in the person of Jesus Christ, or missionary journeys of the Apostle Paul at the expense of the beginnings of human history. Either the bible is a faithful historical narrative of true events given to us by God through the power of the Holy Spirit, or, *not*. There is no in between.

My perspective on this *practical guide* stems from historical theology, and the general practice and belief of the historic Christian church. My position of the first eleven chapters of Genesis is that it is an *historical narrative*. The Bible would be senseless otherwise, nor would it be the Word of God.

My intention is not to give you a complete *commentary* on Genesis 1–11. There have been dozens of great works written throughout church history by better theologians than I, who have given you all you need in exegetical work on those chapters (*Genesis (Geneva Commentaries) by John Calvin*). My intention is to give you more of a *Practical Guide* which explains the main ideas and passages of *Primeval History*, and some main doctrines that can be drawn from those passages in which we, as believing Christians, can have some practical application given to us.

Genesis is often a neglected or misunderstood book by the Christian community at large. It is not placed on a level as, “important as,” the Psalms, or the Gospel of John. But without Genesis we would not have our creation account, the history of the first people who lived on the earth, the reason why people live, the reason why people die, the importance of worship, and a host of other important and necessary foundational topics. But, instead of indulging in a theological *diatribe* on those issues, and more, my desire is to take Genesis from the perspective that Moses intended it for the Israelites to read and understand in their daily walk with God. What would *Joe Israelite* think about the creation narrative? What would *grandma Mishka* think about the disobedience of Adam in the garden? What would the general Israelites believe concerning these things? Would they believe in the gap theory of creation? Would they believe that Adam is just a symbol, or a real person? How did Moses write these things down, carried along by the Holy Spirit, to arrive at inspired Scripture? My design is to concentrate on basic theological values that are *monumental* to a right understanding of the passage, of the coming of the Messiah, and the plan of God.[1]

I am not going to come at this practical guide from the perspective of mainly a rabbinic interpretation. That would be detrimental to the book of Genesis, and the fulfillment we find of many themes in Genesis in the person of Jesus Christ. We will look at Genesis through the lens of Jesus Christ, the one of whom is the complete and utter perfection of the fulfillment of the Scriptures as the one and only Messiah sent from God. Jesus said concerning the Old Testament, “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.” (John 5:39). “And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.” (Luke 24:27). The Scriptures *speak of Jesus Christ*. So, we too will begin with Moses, in the first 11 chapters of the books of Genesis, generally referred to as *Primeval History*. And we will peruse them with a mind towards having a *practical guide* to teach us about how those chapters impact our daily life as followers of Jesus Christ.

Some helpful works that will further your study of the book of Genesis, and some of those quoted in this work, are the following:

Genesis, by John Calvin, Gordon J. Wenham's *Word Biblical Commentary on Genesis*, (1987, 1994), Allen P. Ross' *Creation and Blessing* (1988), *Studies in the Book of Genesis* by Robert C. Harbach, *Commentary on Genesis*, by Matthew Henry, *Genesis*, by John Gill, *Gleanings in Genesis,* by A.W. Pink, *Notes on Genesis f*rom the 1599 Geneva Bible Notes. Also consider many puritan works on the Law of God, and Covenant Theology such as: *Economy of the Covenants Between God and Man*, by Herman Witsius, the *Works* of Jonathan Edwards, Thomas Watson's books, *A Body of Divinity* and *The Ten Commandments,* William Ames' *Marrow of Theology*, George Walker's *Manifold Wisdom of God,* A Discourse on Covenant Theology and Infant Baptism, by Cuthbert Sydenham, *God's Covenant and Our Duty* and *The Covenant of Redemption*, both by Samuel Willard, *The Covenant of God,* by Thomas Blake, *The Covenant of Grace Opened*, by Thomas Hooker, *The Covenant of Life Opened,* by Samuel Rutherford, *The Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace,* by Edmund Calamy, Turretin's *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, and various other individual puritan works (like any of Jeremiah Burroughs works), or puritan systematic theology works.

CHAPTER 1:
VAIN PHILOSOPHIES AND GOD

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," (Gen. 1:1).

We begin the book of Genesis where we have God's self–revelation in the first 11 chapters which primarily pertain to what we will call *Primeval History*. *Primeval* refers to resembling the earliest ages in the history of the world. The Bible begins with this book as God's self–disclosure of His being and works, and it would be wise for Christians to begin there as well. As we will see, the questions to many answers about humankind, sin, creation, and the like, which are often difficult questions, are found *answered* in the book of Genesis. As a matter of fact, the New Testament writers refer to Genesis hundreds of times concerning all sorts of theological topics that are found in the first ten chapters alone. They cover topics like, God in the beginning, (John 1:1); the beginning of the world, (2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 1:2), the creation of the universe, (Hebrews 11:3), mankind being made male and female in God's image, (Mark 10:6–7; Colossians 3:10; 1 Corinthians 11:7), death by sin, (Romans 5:12), the fall of man, (1 Timothy 2:14; 2 Corinthians 11:3); the Gospel of Jesus Christ, (Romans 16:20; Revelation 12:13–17; Luke 10:19), and so on.

As we begin a journey through primeval history, we are going to look at this first part of the first verse of Genesis in which we find the *assumption* of the existence of God. We are going to deal with some introductory ideas, (which are many times always difficult), to have a foundation of propositions to rest on as we study these first eleven chapters.

We first must make a comment concerning the *religious* nature of the Book. God, in His great wisdom, began the revelation of His character by beginning with the book of beginnings, *Genesis*, which in Hebrew means *beginnings*. Genesis was not written so that men may have a scientific cosmology about every intricacy of creation and the beginnings of man. When you look to Genesis you have answers to fundamental

questions. It is a *religious* book, first and foremost, which is really concerned about the relationship between God and his creation, especially the preservation of the covenant family, and His work in that family.

Genesis is divided into eleven sections of genealogy, with an introduction about how those genealogies came to light as a result of creation by God. It begins with God being the supreme and majestic Sovereign creator of everything, so that it can immediately move into the generations that came by way of creation. The Hebrew word *toledot* means *generation*, histories or simply descendants. This first verse in Genesis communicates the assumption that God *is* the supreme and majestic Sovereign creator of everything. It does not start out to prove His existence, but rather assumes it. Such generations are broken down into a structure, or the histories of these genealogical lines. Moses, the writer of Genesis, sets down the following structure of the book:

Creation (1:1–2:3).
The *toledot* (generations) of the heavens and the earth (2:4–4:26).
The generations of Adam (5:1–6:8).
The generations of Noah (6:9–9:29).
The generations of Shem, Ham and Japheth (10:1–11:9).
The generations of Shem (11:10–26).
The generations of Terah (11:27–25:11) which is the Abrahamic narrative.
The generations of Ishmael (25:12–18).
The generations of Isaac (25:19–35:29).
The generations of Esau the Father of Edom (36:1–37:1).
The generations of Jacob (37:2–50:26).

It is divided into families, and it surrounds the family relationship in covenantal aspects within their relationship to God. It describes the decreed plan of God's covenant people. The context, then, is that Moses wrote down what God carried him along to write, concerning *Primeval History*, or the beginnings. Genesis was written to know the purpose of creation and the purpose of man before the Living God. It is a history of the creation of the world. It depicts creation only as a means by which the

Creator would be more clearly seen by accommodating to creation the power of God, and the majesty of His character; who He is and what He does. It is profoundly covenantal, as the means by which God condescended to reveal Himself in such a manner. *The 1647 Westminster Confession of Faith* says in chapter 7, section 1, "The distance between God and the creature is so great that although reasonable creatures do owe obedience unto him as their Creator, yet they could never have any fruition of him as their blessedness and reward but by some voluntary condescension on God's part, which he hath been pleased to express by way of covenant," (1 Sam. 2:25; Job 9:32–33; 22:2–3; 35:7–8; Psa. 100:2–3; 113:5–6; Isa. 40:13–17; Luke 17:10; Acts 17:24–25).

With that structure set in mind, we are still left with the first part of the first verse laid before us. It is simply a summary of the entire Bible. It gives us much to think about. It shows God is the Creator, that everything else is created by Him, and that He is other than or separate from the creation which He made. The history of the heavens and the earth is what the rest of creation shows us throughout the Bible. This *first verse* sets up the rest of the Bible. It never begins with attempting to prove the existence of God on purpose. Instead, it simply gives us a self–revelation of Him. If God were to set up a self–revelation or self–disclosure of Himself, what would He say and what would He have disclosed and written down? We find that first part of the first verse does just that. He began the book by simply saying that, *He created everything*.

In the history of mankind there have been a number of philosophies that have attempted to explain the universe, setting forth ideas concerning creation, life, and existence. Philosophies have always attempted to explain the nature of the universe. In dealing with such an important verse as Genesis 1:1, it is important to see it in contrast to ideas men entangle themselves in. If *you* were God, how would you begin your revelation of yourself to creation? And to see how important this question is, let's turn back the clock for a moment.

We are going to take a little trip back in time, at a specific point in time, revolving around scientific discovery with the most important thinkers that have ever lived. We start on May 28th, 585 BC at specifically

6:13pm, where philosophy was *born*. Thales, a philosopher at that time, predicted an eclipse of the sun. He was, in fact, the first philosopher and scientist the world had known. To make his prediction he had to understand the idea of, "law," laws which govern the universe. He was interested in why things change. He wanted to get back to the root of what makes things permanent in the universe and try to discover whatever it was that holds everything together. He was searching for what he thought was the basic, "stuff," of the universe. What was it made out of? How was it put together? His idea was that the entire universe was made out of *water*. Some believed it was air, some believed it was a combination of elements, earth, air, fire and water. But he thought it was made up of *water*.

After him, Heraclitus, thought the universe was made of the basic *stuff* of cosmic fire. He went on to say profoundly for his day, that *laws* do not change. Laws remain the same. What was cosmic fire? Does it remain the same? Heraclitus had no idea. But he believed it was the basic stuff of the universe nonetheless.

After Heraclitus, came Pythagoras who began to teach a difference between the body and soul, the difference between something material and immaterial. He was the first to make up the trans–migration of the soul or *reincarnation*. (Later Plato took off with this idea). Pythagoras introduced this *spiritual* matter idea, but still that spiritual matter was made up of physical matter. Huh? In any case, that's what *he* thought. Everything reincarnated itself over and over.

Parmenides came along and he was the first rationalist of philosophy. He said the laws of logic and reason are laws of reality and we must follow them if we are to know anything about the universe. He equated permanent laws with things that were real. He brought in the idea that if we think rightly, then we have to follow these laws of logic, otherwise we can't think *rightly* about anything. True enough. Now, he didn't *conclude* anything substantial in his ideas of philosophy, but he did insist that this was the *road* to thinking rightly.

Anaxagoras came later and introduced the *infinite*. There are infinite numbers of different elements. Not that everything *is* infinite, or

that finite things are infinite, but that there is an infinite number of elements. These he called *seeds*. These basic seeds of the universe are always changing and, becoming something. So he really introduced the problem of "becoming." But now, there was a problem, how can something *become* something unless it has a specific being to itself first? Next appeared the problem of explaining *how* something exists, not just what they were made up of. This meant they needed an answer to the question of *being*.

No one could figure out "being" until a few new fellows came upon the scene in 400's BC: Protagoras, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. Protagoras said, "Man is the measure of all things." Relativism came to be birthed at this point. Here morality was being discussed, because morality demonstrated something more than just existence, it demonstrated *accountability*.

Plato himself refuted this idea of relativism. He said to Protagoras, why do you pick a *man* to be the measure of all things, why not a dog or a giraffe? Relativism is self–defeating because it is in fact *relative*. What if people think Protagoras is crazy? Then his brand of relativism is different from others who have a different view of what Protagoras said. So relativism does not solve any problems, it simply allows each person to believe whatever they want to believe about the Creator of the universe, nature of the universe, and morality.

Socrates brought in a new idea of the, *One and the Many.* This was a study in ultimate reality. It demonstrated the difference between the world of multiplicity and change, and the world of stability and permanence. He knew that there was something out there that was stable and permanent which *all* things had to come *from.* He believed in *absolute* truth. He knew there was an ultimate standard, but he really never made the touchdown.

Plato took Socrates further. He said that there was the mysterious *world of the forms*. The world of the forms is the immaterial, eternal, uncreated pattern or archetype of this world. For example, you may be sitting in a chair reading this book. You would attest that the chair you are sitting in is a *type* of chair. There are chairs that are bigger, or chairs that

are smaller than yours. But they all have the inherent quality of *chairness*. Plato said that in the world of the forms, in the archetype, there is one perfect chair by which all other chairs get their quality of *chairness* from. This idea can be associated with any part of the created order. There is in the world of the forms a perfect circle, of which all other circles get their inherent quality from. There is the number one. It can be typed out as "one" or "1" or "I" depending on the way it is written or used. But in the world of the forms there is a perfect conception of a "1" in which all other 1's get their inherent attributes and quality from. The world of the forms is the upper world, and this material world is the lower world. The upper world is the pattern *for* the lower world. So, Plato went the furthest so far, in that he said the ultimate form of the universe derives from the idea of the perfect *Good*. The world here did not create itself. The *Good* is the creating and sustaining cause of the universe. Where did the *Good* come from? Plato asked himself. It had to come from somewhere...right?

To make a universe Plato came up with this new idea. You needed 4 things to make a universe which came from the "Good." But it is important to note that these four things were *part* of the universe and did not *transcend* the universe. So he was already blowing it at this point. Nevertheless, he taught that you need four things: 1) the world of the forms, 2) Matter. But, what "matter was he had no idea. 3) You needed a cosmic oven to cook the matter. 4) You need a Craftsman, a finite super–being, that can do the cooking or baking. Plato was serious. You, the reader, should see instantly through his *nonsense*. Baking? Really? Plato's Craftsman was limited in being, limited in what he could know, and limited with what he had to work with. But Plato had no idea where any of *this* came from.

Finally, Aristotle came on the scene and he came up with the notion that everything can be explained from the material world. All you have to do is break down the essential parts of the particular things. He completely denied any existence after you die. He was a *naturalist*. He said that there was no ultimate *anything*, but rather that the mind of man was *the* ultimate. Aristotle was stumped many times in his understanding of the universe since he relied totally on his mind as the ultimate power. So to explain things he could not explain otherwise, he made up *little gods*

to help him out. He called them *Unmoved Movers*. They were much the same as Plato's *Craftsman*. There were 56 of them. How he came up with 56 of them we will never know. But *his* mind could only take him so far. So he decided that since he needed something to help him out here so he would not go against the laws of reason, he needed something higher than the universe to finish his understanding of the reality of things. And yet, Aristotle did not believe these things actually existed. Now, to his credit, Aristotle did help somewhat with understanding things like *causes and effects* and how they relate. But he totally blew it when it came to the construction or beginning of the universe because he had *no real answer*.

This is the problem. Even when you deal with all of philosophies that run amuck today (like evolution), they don't have an answer from this *stuff* the universe came from. The greatest philosophers of human history were trying to come up with ideas like seeds, and cosmic fire, the world of the forms, and cosmic ovens. But, the first real account of the creation of the universe was written down 500 years *before* the first Philosopher ever came upon the scene. Moses wrote down, "*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth...*" This was 500 years before these vain philosophers ever came around, and the truth was already penned and circulating in the community of the covenant people of God.

What does our verse say in Genesis 1:1? First we must look at, "In the Beginning"[2] the very first and initial act of creation. "*Bereshith*" means, "in the beginning," where we get the word "Genesis" from the Greek translation of the Hebrew word which means "beginnings." A Philosopher asked Augustine at one time, "Why did your Christian God wait so long before he created the world? What was he doing?" Augustine replied, "He was preparing hell for people who ask stupid questions like that." All the Bible demonstrates is that in the beginning there was nothing but God Himself, and then, from His creative act, the world and everything in it was created. So, who is this God who created everything?

We need to briefly look at the word "God," *Elohim* which invokes the idea of a plurality in the Godhead. It is where we see in the Hebrew both unity and plurality at the same time. It is a Trinitarian reference here, and the more immediate reference is seen in verse 2.[3] John 1:1 and

Hebrews 1:2 demonstrate that all the members of the Trinity were involved in creation. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God,” (John. 1:1). “Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds,” (Heb. 1:2). God the Father, the Spirit, and the Son all were active in creation. What did this *three and one* God do?

God *created* the heavens and the earth, which means he brought into existence the creation of the universe. This represents, right out of the gate, a clearly defined theology. It lends itself to the concept of creation *ex–nihilo*. God has a power that allows him to bring into existence those things that were not in existence before. The language is *bara,* by which is signified the *bringing into existence anything out of nothing*. The *law of inertia* and the laws of Science teach that, *ex nihilo nihil fit*, “out of nothing, nothing comes.” This is true indeed, and if there was simply nothing there would still be nothing. That is why all those vain philosophies could not come up with an answer to the basic idea of where the universe comes from. Nothing cannot make something, but God is not nothing. God is not only something, but He is the Creator of all things. He made the heavens and the earth.

In a profoundly religious sense, in a cosmological sense, the earth is under the control of divine sovereignty. The earth and the heavens are *totally and completely* under the control of divine sovereignty. Moses did not use the term “yatsar” *to form*, but “bara” *to create*. God has power over all things and brings into existence *everything*. Naturalism is self–defeating and the philosophers did not seek an answer outside of the known universe, which is why Aristotle had to create his 56 unmoved movers to do the creating. Naturalism gets men stuck in their own head. It was impossible for the philosophers to have their thinking move outside the known universe so they failed miserably at their conclusions. Moses says you are assuming things you can’t prove, in fact that are unprovable from the get go since the universe was *created* and not *formed*. They kept trying to come up with how the universe was *formed* from seeds, or cosmic fire or forms or the like. Moses tells them they are thinking wrongly from the beginning since everything was *created* by the Sovereign God of the universe *out of nothing*. This is the way God begins his book of

Beginnings. God does not begin his book with, “This is the Gospel of Jesus Christ,” which is what every church tells every new convert to go and read first. Rather, God begins (which should be a great lesson for us), with the notions that He is the Sovereign Creator of all things, and all things owe their existence to Him and His power. The puritans collectively believed this was the most important verse in the entire Bible. Why? It *assumes* God, and then demonstrates His character, law and work. It summarizes the relationship of everything else to Him. The rest of the Bible is an application and explanation of this one verse in relationship to God. So what do we say about this verse in relation to us as covenant people?

God as Creator is axiomatic to life in general. This concept is part of the central point of life. If the universe was created by seeds, or air or water, or whatever, that “god” of sorts, is *owed* obedience and worship. Whatever created everything is owed obedience simply because of the act of creation itself. *That* “god” has the power to bring into existence everything.

The 1647 Westminster Shorter Catechism asks, “What is God? Answer: God is a Spirit, in and of himself infinite in being, glory, blessedness, and perfection; all–sufficient, eternal, unchangeable, incomprehensible, everywhere present, almighty, knowing all things, most wise, most holy, most just, most merciful and gracious, long–suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.” That is a summary of Genesis 1:1 of sorts. We will see that the book of Genesis itself explains who this God is who *created everything*. Everything you want to know about God is contained in that book. The fall of man and the Gospel is contained in that book. Paul says, “And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed,” (Gal. 3:8). Everything that is fundamental to God is in the book of Genesis.

If the Scripture we read at the first part of this chapter is true, then that necessarily implies that all the philosophy I noted is *vain philosophy*. It would be a vain thing to suppose what these half–witted philosophers tried to come up with as a way to rid themselves of the necessity of knowing what their relationship was to God. That is

essentially what pagan philosophy is all about – getting rid of God and explaining the universe and everything in it *by the measure of man*. If you visit Harvard University you would see on the Philosophy building an engraving in stone. When they first thought about what to write in the stone for all to see who came to the building, the committee voted that the saying should read, "Man is the Measure of all things." The head of the committee was a Christian man, and he knew the stone masons were coming in during vacation week to the do the final carving. He interrupted them upon their entrance and said that there was going to be a change on the saying being carved. And so the masons received the orders and completed the project. The philosophers came back from vacation to find that the stone had been carved with "Who is man that Thou art mindful of him," from Psalm 8:4, demonstrating the vanity of man's thoughts before God. Pagan philosophy remains atheistic in opposition to God.

Instead, the Bible teaches that there is a God who created this universe. Creation is the act of the power of the one, true Living God. The first act of self–discloser that God accomplished was creation. It was an unmistakable act of His being. Then the next step we logically have is to know *what kind* of God He is, and know what *our* relationship before Him is. Everything created owes its existence to the Creator, and owes worship of that Creator. What is your relationship to this God? What does He require of you? What does He want you to be? How does He want you act? Are you listening to Him? Do you believe in Him? These questions make no impact on His actual existence. Whether one believes in God or not, does not negate the existence of His being, or the non–existence of such a being. But philosophers for centuries have continually repackaged the same vain philosophies in order to disregard ultimate questions.

Genesis 1:1 is the most important verse in the Bible. This is the most important because it's the main thesis of the Scriptures. *The Westminster Shorter Catechism* in question 1 asks, "What is the chief end of man?" It answers, "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever."

CHAPTER 2:
GOD, THE LIVING GOD

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," (Gen. 1:1).

There are three maxims I want to give in reverse order to understand key aspects of Genesis which we need to keep in mind. First is the relationship of God to His covenant people as a *fundamental* maxim. A *covenant* is a pact or agreement between two parties. It is the central structure that is found all through Genesis for the preservation of the family and the people of God. This we will topically look at after we consider the doctrine of God.

The medium of His covenant relationship is by Law. The Law is the manner in which God *relates* to His covenant people. We will survey the manner in which God uses the perfect reflection of his character and intents in the Law later on. But briefly, to consider this second maxim, we turn to the *Westminster Larger Catechism* and its answer to question 93, "What is the moral law?" Its answer, "The law is the declaration of the will of God to mankind, directing and binding everyone to personal, perfect, and perpetual conformity and obedience to it, in the frame and disposition of the whole man, soul and body, and in performance of all those duties of holiness and righteousness which he owes to God: promising life upon the fulfilling, and threatening death upon the breach of it."

The covenant of God and the Law of God are two fundamental maxims which we must keep in mind, and will expand on in later chapters. Covenant is the way God relates to men in a relationship, a theme running through the whole book of Genesis. And the mode by which the covenant is enacted in various administrations is by way of Law. Before, though, we turn to the particulars of that relational history, we must know something about who God is. This presses us to turn to the doctrine of God.

What does Genesis say about the doctrine of God – a systematic theology of God? All men have some knowledge of God. They are at some level convicted that there is a Divine Being on whom they are dependent, and to whom they are ultimately responsible. Yet when we speak about the Doctrine of God, we are not referring simply to God's invisible attributes. It is imperative to always remember that man's *special knowledge* of God is a gift – the Bible is a gift. It is not that men simply attain a complete doctrine of God, or understanding about God, without God's help. As a matter of fact, without God's help, such a knowledge is impossible. That is why such knowledge is gained by what we call in theology *special revelation.* Special revelation is God's special accommodation of knowledge to our little brains so we can understand Him but, by the power of the Holy Spirit. God is not physical – but the Bible uses this as *baby talk* to us so we can understand things about Him. It is not that men gained this knowledge by self–exertion, or some high level of dedication and study. Nor is this kind of special knowledge something men deserve, something they think is theirs by right. It is something He gives, and He does not give it universally. There is no cosmic billboard in the sky for all to see in this way.

To define God in this manner of accommodation in systematic theology or the doctrine of God, is simply to distinguish or separate from one another His various attributes. When we analyze God, we are analyzing the idea of God as it lies in our mind – that is why we have to compartmentalize these things into groups or categories – so we understand it. How we *think* about what we know influences our doctrine of God – that means, "how much we know," will dictate, "how much we know *of God*." That is why understanding the Bible in the way God intended for His people to understand is paramount, otherwise, one falls into idolatry. People have all sorts of ideas about God. Oftentimes Christendom's idea about God (who He is and what He does) is like Mr. Potato Head. You pull Mr. Potato Head out of the box, and you fasten on the potato body the eyes you like, the ears you like, the mustache you like, the hands you like, and so on, and there you have your very own Mr. Potato Head. In the same way people pull out of Scripture things they like about God and discard things they do not like. They in turn have fashioned an idol, a Mr. Potato Head of their own choosing.

When we formulate what God says in His Word about Himself and His attributes, we call this the *Doctrine of God*, or *Theology Proper*. There is nothing more soothing for the soul than working through the doctrines which surround our great and glorious God. As Christians, that is the marrow of our feast, as Genesis demonstrates these important aspects of who God is and what He does.

God is a *living* God. In accommodating language, God is described as speaking, seeing, hearing, resting, and breathing, (Genesis 1:1, 2, 3, 17, 18). When one speaks they are to express thoughts, opinions or feelings orally. Genesis 1:3, "Then God *said*, "Let there be light"; and there was light." Genesis 17:15, "Then God said to Abraham…" God also sees, meaning to perceive or detect as if by sight. Genesis 6:5, "Then the LORD *saw* that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Genesis 29:31, "When the LORD *saw* that Leah was unloved, He opened her womb; but Rachel was barren." Genesis 16:13, "Then she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, You–Are–the–God–Who–Sees; for she said, "Have I also here seen Him who sees me?" God is one who hears, meaning to listen to someone with attention. Genesis 21:17, "And God heard the voice of the lad. Then the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said to her, "What ails you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is." God is one who rests, meaning freedom from activity or work. God in this way is active and then rests. Genesis 2:2–3, "And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made." God is seen as one who breathes, meaning to send out by exhaling. Genesis 2:7, "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being." The quality that God possesses is inherently used to affect the living nature of Adam through His very breath. Even God's breathing is life–giving.

God existed before the creation of the universe. Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." God *necessarily*

exists. Theologically, this necessity is called self–existence.[4] God alone holds the power of being. He does not rely on anything other than His own being to exist. It is unfathomable for us to consider this; that God *exists*, and His self–existence is before anything.

God created humankind, and did it according to His likeness and image (Genesis 1:1, 2, 5). The word "create" is used 11 times in Genesis and in chapters 1–2 it is used 7 times. Right from the beginning God desires His creation to know that He is their source of life. Genesis 1:26–27, "Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." This is repeated in shorter form in Genesis 5:1–2, "This is the book of the genealogy of Adam. In the day that God created man, He made him in the likeness of God. He created them male and female, and blessed them and called them Mankind in the day they were created." The Living God created men after His image. He created them in knowledge, righteousness and holiness with dominion over the animals. The Creator believed his image was so worthwhile that He imprinted it on the pinnacle of His creation and made them living beings, but completely dependent on His Ultimate being.

God intrudes into the world with powerful acts, and human acts such as eating, talking, wrestling, or showing himself (Genesis 12:17, 18:2, 32:24). Genesis 12:17, "But the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife." We find the Angel of the Lord in Genesis 18:2, "So he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing by him; and when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground…" And also in Genesis 16:7, "Now the Angel of the LORD[5] found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur." The Angel wrestled with Jacob in Genesis 32:24, "Then Jacob was left alone; and a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day." He appears to Jacob intruding into his dreams in Genesis 28:12–13, "Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven;

and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. And behold, the LORD stood above it and said: “I am the LORD God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants.”

God is a God of revelation (even before the written Word). He revealed Himself by *appearances*. Genesis 12:7, “Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, “To your descendants I will give this land.” And there he built an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him.” Genesis 18:1, “Then the LORD appeared to him by the terebinth trees of Mamre, as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day.” He revealed Himself by visions. Genesis 15:1, “After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, “Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward.”[6] He revealed Himself by dreams. Genesis 31:11 says, “Then the Angel of God spoke to me in a dream, saying, ‘Jacob.’ And I said, ‘Here I am.’” Genesis 31:24 he came to pagan men, “But God had come to Laban the Syrian in a dream by night, and said to him, “Be careful that you speak to Jacob neither good nor bad.” He also came to Pharaoh in Genesis 41:25, “Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, “The dreams of Pharaoh are one; God has shown Pharaoh what He is about to do.” He also revealed Himself by oracles in Genesis 25:22–23, “But the children struggled together within her; and she said, “If all is well, why am I like this?” So she went to inquire of the LORD. And the LORD said to her: “Two nations are in your womb, Two peoples shall be separated from your body; One people shall be stronger than the other, And the older shall serve the younger.”

God is personal and living, and Genesis demonstrates this over and over. He is personal by way of analogy. He is a Spirit and does not have human flesh, or eyes, or ears, *etc*. Genesis 1:2 says, “And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.” In accommodating language, like baby talk, that He is life itself, and that He is alive – having life, existence or being. Idolatry is the opposite. Idols are dumb and mute. Genesis 31:35 says, “And she said to her father, “Let it not displease my lord that I cannot rise before you, for the manner of women is with me.” And he searched but did not find the household idols.” The idols were generally kept in a cupboard and pulled out when a particular need arose

that required the powers that idol represented. Even *concepts* of idols are dead and dumb because they are simply self–conceived deceptions that give men a little comfort in avoiding the true reality of the living God. Heathen people of the times had little concept of what the living God was and instead they retreated back to worshiping pieces of wood carved into an idol.

These dumb idols have no being or power. Jesus Christ was quick to make that distinction in comparing the Living God with something dead or dumb using the patriarchs of Genesis. Matthew 22:32, "'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." Those associated with God's power in them are not dead, they are alive. Jesus says "Therefore you are greatly mistaken." The living God is not to be associated with death or the inert nature of the dumb idol. Household gods are in a sense *lost*, and they have no power to stop thieves or to give gifts or to make someone prosperous. They leave people dumbfounded in a given situation – like they did with Laban. God is the One in whom we live and move and have our being. Living for God is housed in exemplifying *the Life of God in us*. Really, that is the basic definition of what religion is all about. Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever. It is living before the Living God in accordance with the dictates of His will, and living before His open gaze. Think of it, the Living God gives all men their being, knows their thoughts, and will ultimately judge them for every intent they had, have or ever will have.

People with *the life of God in the soul of man*, in our very souls, are in those who truly encounter him. The fall of man sets the context in which there is a need for *new life* given from the living God. God had given Adam life in the garden, but this was lost due to disobedience. The life was removed. The new life principle has to be implanted. This new life that a Christian encounters with the living God is the new principle or effect of the work of the Spirit of God applying the work of the Redeemer, who comes to crush the head of the serpent (Genesis 3:15), into the soul of the believer. For the Christian, Abraham is used in Romans and Galatians as *the father of our faith*. Genesis houses the principle example of this new life that God instills in men through the lengthy historical narratives

surrounding the faith of Abraham. The Living God interacts with His creation to motivate them to holiness and good works. Pharaoh was not a follower of God, Abraham was. Laban was not a follower of God, Jacob was. The dichotomy of the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent forever exists. Genesis exemplifies the change in men and the work of God in the heart, and even the restraint that God places on men concerning sin. As a matter of fact, Genesis houses sections or groups of genealogical lines that flow forth from the seed of the woman, in contrast to the wickedness of the serpent's unregenerate line. God, as the Living God implants life in His people, and that life motivates them towards a burning affection and desire to please their Creator, God and Father. It is their all–consuming aim.

The New Testament, in recognizing this implanted life, echoes the life principle – the Life of God in the soul of men. The Living God intrudes on men. John 3:14–15, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, "that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life." John 10:28, "And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand." John 17:3 says, "And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent." The Living, eternal God implants within us the seeds of eternal life and the effects of the Spirit's work. It cannot be anything but eternal and life giving to those to whom it is given. That is why Christ calls it living water flowing out of those who are born again. John 6:69 says, "Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus Christ is the Son of the Living God. The Redeemer of the *Living* God comes to initiate the personal relationship that the Living God desires to have with His people. He accomplishes this in such a unique manner than not only does He die, and is buried, but exemplifies and stamps His work with the approval of the resurrection and the *life* which follows that resurrection. Resurrection equals *life*. The Living God raised Christ from the dead because salvation and victory over death is accomplished by the principle of God's necessary being – the life that emanates from Him. Not everyone has this life, and as Christ says, most people *don't* have this life. It must be given to them, implanted in them by the *Living* God. Otherwise men remain dead in sin. Romans 9:26, "There

they shall be called sons of the living God." Thus, God's people experience the indwelling power of the living God and take on a personal covenantal relationship with Him through the only means of salvation, Jesus Christ. 2 Corinthians 6:16 says, "For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people." If one encounters the Living God with that implanted Life principle, then their lives reflect the reality of coming into contact with God. Their lives demonstrate the power of the Living God to change them from being adulterers, fornicators, those unclean, those who are lewd, idolaters, manipulators, haters, contentious, jealous, angry, selfish, envious, murderers, drunkards, "of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God," (Gal. 5:19).

Religion is drudgery for the wicked and they often see it as a crutch – because they have no life. How could personal devotions be boring if you are coming into contact with the *Living* God? How could church be boring if you are coming into contact with the Living God? Genesis, then, not only furnishes us with the doctrine of the Living God, but demonstrates through its historical narratives the immense importance of following in the line of God's chosen people instilled with new life, rather than those who trust in dumb idols. What do you trust? Laban ran to his household gods. Pharaoh turned to his priests who practice magic and tell superstitions. Before Abraham was converted he was a worshipper of pagan idols. Men today still worship idols. They turn to idols such as their jobs, their friends, money, cars and houses (*things*). But satisfaction is only found in the Living God. That is what Genesis will teach us. End this chapter with contemplating your standing before the Living God.

CHAPTER 3:
GOD, THE SOVEREIGN GOD

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," (Gen. 1:1).

From the very beginning, Genesis demonstrates God as *sovereign*. What is Sovereignty? Sovereignty is supreme power and a freedom from external control. No one counsels God as to how He should be, what He should do or how He should act. Sovereignty is fundamentally the supremacy of God, the kingship of God, and the *godhood* of God. The sovereignty of the God of Scripture is absolute, irresistible, and infinite in power.

Sovereignty characterizes the whole being of God. If He loves someone, He sovereignly loves them. If He is just with someone, He is sovereignly just. He is sovereign in all His attributes. He is sovereign in the exercise of His power. His power is exercised according to His will, when He wills, and where He wills it. It is the freedom of complete control over creation and the *right* to have such control – because God is the God who made everything.

God sovereignly created and named everything (chapters 1–2, 17, 32). He is the Sovereign Creator. Genesis 1:1 says, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." He created the fabric of day and night, heavens and earth, sun and stars, *etc*. and names them all. Genesis 17:19 says, He named Isaac, "Then God said: "No, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his descendants after him." Genesis 32:26–28 says, He names Jacob, "And He said, "Let Me go, for the day breaks." But he said, "I will not let You go unless You bless me!" So He said to him, "What is your name?" He said, "Jacob." And He said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed." Dominion over others is demonstrated by naming. God allowed Adam to name the

animals by dominion. God names everything He created, and has the sovereign right to name everything under His control.

God is called the Most High God. Genesis 14:18–20 says, “Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. And he blessed him and said: “Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand.” And he gave him a tithe of all.” *El Elyon* in Hebrew means *God Most High*. The word “most high” is often used of the Davidic king exalted above all other monarchs. God is the sovereign God who is above all “gods.” Melchizedek says it there times in the chapter. Interestingly, it uses the triplet idea to emphasize the nature of God.

God sovereignly institutes covenant relationships unilaterally with us. People sovereignly imposed upon do not get to say, “No Lord I don’t want to be in relationship with you.” When God makes a covenant, He makes it unilaterally. He doesn’t ask men, “would you like to?” Instead He simply makes the covenant with them, otherwise He damns them. The word *covenant* – by way of reminder – is a pact or agreement between two parties. Men are placed in covenant with God based on commands and stipulations. They will be blessed to obey. They will be cursed to disobey. This is the primary structure of the *Covenant of Works* with Adam. Genesis 2:15–17 says, “Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; “but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

God also covenants with Noah. Keep in mind there is a distinction between Adam and the rest of those God covenants with since Adam’s covenant was based on *Adam* working, the all other revealed covenants are with *Christ* to men, housed in what is called the *Covenant of Grace*. Noah is one of the recipients of the *Covenant of Grace*. Genesis 6:18, “But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall go into the ark – you, your sons, your wife, and your sons’ wives with you.” Genesis 9:9–10, “And as for Me, behold, I establish My covenant with you and with your

descendants after you, “and with every living creature that is with you: the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you, of all that go out of the ark, every beast of the earth.” This has repercussions on every living creature.

God makes a covenant with Abram. Abram is one of the recipients of the *Covenant of Grace*. Genesis 15:18, “On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram…” Genesis 17:2, “And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly.” Genesis 17:10, “This is My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be circumcised.” Men are either under one of two covenants. Either they are under the covenant made with Adam, which all men are by nature; or they are under the covenant made with Jesus Christ, the *Covenant of Grace*, which they partake of by grace through faith. Yet suffice it for now to understand that God condescends to us by way of covenant.

In covenanting with his people, God sovereignly issues commandments or *rules* for holy living. God solely holds the act or power of commanding. He exercises a dominating influence over them through obedience. Men are at God’s command, which means He has them at His immediate disposal. In the *Covenant of Works* Adam was bound to obey by his own will and power. Genesis 2:17 says, “but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

In covenanting with Noah He commands Noah in Genesis 9:1 to, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.” Also he says in Genesis 9:4–6, “But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. “Surely for your lifeblood I will demand a reckoning; from the hand of every beast I will require it, and from the hand of man. From the hand of every man’s brother I will require the life of man. “Whoever sheds man’s blood, By man his blood shall be shed; For in the image of God He made man.” If you murder someone, your life shall be required of you.

In covenanting with Abraham He says in Genesis 17:1, “I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless.” Blameless? Yes, God

has the right and power to command of His people whatever is in accordance with God's nature and being. To obey God is to be like God.

God is also sovereign over the elements. He sovereignly enacted the flood, or the destruction of all mankind which He had made. Because God is sovereignly God, He can create and destroy as He sees fit. God sets the time of people's *lives*. "And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years," (Gen. 6:3). Everyone has one life to live. In this case God said that there would be 120 years before the ark was done and the world destroyed. Once Noah and his family climbed aboard the ark, the world would be extinguished due to their wickedness and iniquity. The sovereign God determines that. Everyone has one life, but God sovereignly determines its length and use. Genesis 6:17 says, "And behold, I Myself am bringing floodwaters on the earth, to destroy from under heaven all flesh in which is the breath of life; everything that is on the earth shall die." God is often depicted by the contemporary church like a single minded idol, a big ball of love at the expense of His other attributes.

God was sovereign over bringing the flood, but after the flood has come, and after a certain amount of days, the waters receded. Genesis 8:1 says, "Then God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the animals that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters subsided." His power is sovereignly over the elements themselves.

God sovereignly confused human language and dispersed the nations. Genesis 11:7 says, "Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." This is a particularly amazing verse. These builders desired to do the opposite of what God commanded. God had commanded that they go over all the earth and multiply. Instead, they gathered together in one place and wanted to reach up to the heavens in order to be seen. The human race would not, then, fulfill the mandate God gave to have dominion over the earth. So God confused their language. They all spoke a specific language. God has power and sovereignty over the mind. Not only did God remove the ability

to understand their own language, but implanted, by some type of osmosis, the ability to communicate with a new language.

God sovereignly issued prophecy which means that God has the ability to control the path of time and its outcome so those things come to pass. Genesis 15:5 says, “Then He brought him outside and said, “Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.” And He said to him, “So shall your descendants be.” Genesis 46:3 says of God’s communication to Jacob, “So He said, “I am God, the God of your father; do not fear to go down to Egypt, for I will make of you a great nation there.” He promised kings from the womb of Sarah in Genesis 17:16, “And I will bless her and also give you a son by her; then I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples shall be from her.” He will sovereignly control the history of time to bring these things to pass.

God promised the land of Canaan to His people which shows, He is sovereign over the boundaries of men. Genesis 12:1, “Now the LORD had said to Abram: “Get out of your country, From your family And from your father’s house, To a land that I will show you.” Genesis 17:8, “Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.” God will give the land to whomever He wants.

God sovereignly sets up people in political power. Genesis 41:38 says, “And Pharaoh said to his servants, “Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom is the Spirit of God?” And Joseph says of this act, Genesis 50:20, “But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.” The brothers sold Joseph into slavery, but out of that God uses providential circumstances to place him highest in the land only second to Pharaoh.

God sovereignly controlled people’s dreams; a vision with Abram (Gen 15:1); a dream of a ladder with Jacob (Gen 28:12); Laban in a dream (Gen. 31:34). In Genesis 40:8 it says, “And they said to him, “We each have had a dream, and there is no interpreter of it.” So Joseph said to them, “Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell them to me, please.”

God sovereignly destroyed Sodom. Genesis 19:24–25, “Then the LORD rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the LORD out of the heavens. 25 So He overthrew those cities, all the plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground.”

God sovereignly spared innocent people in destroying Sodom. Genesis 19:22–23 says, “Hurry, escape there. For I cannot do anything until you arrive there.” Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar. The sun had risen upon the earth when Lot entered Zoar.”

God sovereignly tested people. Genesis 22:1 says, “Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, “Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.”

God sovereignly designates the physical infirmities men bear including leprosy, cancer and any disease. Genesis 32:25 states, “Now when He saw that He did not prevail against him, He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob’s hip was out of joint as He wrestled with him.” Jacob’s hip was never the same. It remained maimed for the rest of his life.

God sovereignly ruled over nation’s economies and over life itself. As we read, remember the butcher and baker and their dreams, or the famine that was coming to the land.

God sovereignly rules over sin. Genesis 20:6 says, “And God said to him in a dream, “Yes, I know that you did this in the integrity of your heart. For I also withheld you from sinning against Me; therefore I did not let you touch her.” God sovereignly held back Abimelech from touching Sarah and sinning.

God is sovereignly gracious when He is not obliged to be. Genesis 3:21, “Also for Adam and his wife the LORD God made tunics of skin, and clothed them.” God did not need to institute sacrifice and forgiveness after the fall if He chose not to. He would have been completely just in destroying men and sending mankind to hell. But He was sovereignly gracious, and not only clothed and provided for Adam and his wife, but

also instated the means of forgiveness in sacrifice, and the Gospel as given in Genesis 3:15.

God sovereignly elects people which means, He is sovereign over their *souls* and eternal residence. Genesis 12:1 says, “Now the LORD had said to Abram: “Get out of your country, from your family And from your father’s house, To a land that I will show you.” Abram was a Gentile pagan. But God chose him over all the others of the land. Genesis 25:23 shows that God loved Jacob but hated Esau, “And the LORD said to her: “Two nations are in your womb, Two peoples shall be separated from your body; One people shall be stronger than the other, And the older shall serve the younger.” Genesis 27:35 shows the means by which Jacob stole the blessing, “But he said, “Your brother came with deceit and has taken away your blessing.” Later, commentary on this was given by Malachi and then subsequently the apostle Paul, Malachi 1:2–3, “I have loved you,” says the LORD. “Yet you say, ‘In what way have You loved us?’ Was not Esau Jacob’s brother?” Says the LORD. “Yet Jacob I have loved; But Esau I have hated, And laid waste his mountains and his heritage For the jackals of the wilderness.”[7]

What do we see in this simple survey of God’s sovereignty in Genesis? Just from the book of Genesis we see God is sovereign *over ever*ything. God cannot be anything else but sovereign. What does it really mean that God is the Sovereign God? It means that sovereignty is not simply the exercise of God’s governmental power. Rather, it concerns the Being of the One whose pleasure is performed and whose will is executed. So we can say that *sovereignty* demonstrates that the great God, blessed forever, has an absolute power and right of dominion over His creatures, to dispose and determine them as seems Him good. There can be but one infinite; for such a being fills heaven and earth; and so there is no place or room for another. There can be but one omnipotent; for He that is such, has all others under his feet. There can be but one supreme; supreme power may reside in many, as in mixed monarchies and commonwealths; but as lawmakers and supreme, they are but one. There can be but one First Cause, from which all beings else derive their original; “of whom, and for whom, are all things.”

Keep in mind God is everywhere present, but for the sake of this illustration imagine that God peers around the universe for a moment as His gaze travels the galaxies. So, we find God attending other parts of the universe, some great super nova or red dwarf star in the furthest part of space. Maybe He is directing some special event of dark matter, with a collision of subatomic particles to create something new that we might never discover in this life. And He hears a squeak, a little squeak that bothers his ears in some distant part of the universe. So He decides He will have a look at this annoying sound. His attention is drawn around countless galaxies and planets, past nebula and gaseous masses to wind up peering effortlessly through the Milky Way to our tiny blue earth. His gaze passes through the clouds down countless miles to a beach on the Pacific coast to find a New Ager standing there with his arms held high chanting, "I am god, I am god." At such things God laughs with *derision*. That New Ager who believes they are god, cannot change a hair on their head and yet they have the audacity to believe that they are a god. It is ludicrous for a created being to even mouth the words that they have any right to the name *God*.

What profit is there from this survey in Genesis for the Christian? They understand their maker, and may rightly call on His name. Genesis 4:26, "Then men began to call on the name of the LORD." They know that God is to be worshipped as a result of being the Creator and Redeemer. Let us give Him the glory of this great attribute, by a real and practical owning that indispensable bond of obedience which it lays on every creature: we are highly obliged by it, both in point of subjection, and in point of faith. Christians are to obey His laws, statutes, ordinances, and approach Him with the highest attention of doing that which He commands. They know He directs and creates the various providences that befall them. Since God sovereignly controls everything, as Genesis demonstrates, men ought to be humbled at the will of the Sovereign Creator.

Dealing with certain sovereign acts is hard, but doable by grace. What would it have been like to be Noah on the ark when the waters came? But Noah believed God's promises and God protected him. Sovereignty does not make life easy, but rather *manageable*. Their life is a panorama of God's sovereignty over them, and they see it. It presses men to work up

trusting faith. God's Sovereignty obliges men to believe in Him, and also gives opportunity for men to act in accordance of faith, and work on their faith. To these ends the Lord holds it forth to Abraham, "I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect," (Genesis 17:1). James 2:23 calls Abraham the friend of God. Are *you* God's friend?

Let's take a moment to briefly apply the idea of sovereignty to our own Christian walk and life. The Scriptures everywhere attest to Genesis' depiction of God's complete sovereignty. From Genesis 1:1 we find the Bible demonstrating His sovereignty in His every act. He calls things into being, upholds them by the power of His word, and works all things for His own glory. Psalm 135:5–6, "For I know that the LORD is great, And our Lord is above all gods. Whatever the LORD pleases He does, In heaven and in earth, In the seas and in all deep places."

Sovereignty is *appalling* to the carnal man. Carnal men have no desire to be ruled by anything other than their own wills. They want to be masters of their own destiny. But men's wills are no match for the will of the Creator and Sustainer of their being. Exodus 10:20, "But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the children of Israel go." God so set the circumstances around Pharaoh that the only choice Pharaoh would make was God's will – and so he was further hardened. Exodus 5:2, "And Pharaoh said, "Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, nor will I let Israel go." God so ordered things around Pharaoh that he had no other choice than to choose to do what God wanted to ultimately come to pass. God utilized his rebellion to demonstrate His own glory.

Someone might give an objection. *If God is this sovereign, and man is not really free, man has no responsibility. We are all just puppets on a string, and the Bible is simply the record of a play already written and forced by the hand of God.* But such an objection misses the idea that God is sovereign over the *means* to the end, as well as the end. Do you feel like a puppet? The clothes that you have on today are exactly what God so ordered. But when you got dressed did you feel like you were being *manipulated*? God ordains the means as well as the end. But the reason they use it as an excuse is because sovereignty is *scary*. Think about

Pharaoh, Romans 9:17, “For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, “For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth.” Jonathan Edwards said, “The Sovereignty of God is the stumbling block on which thousands fall and perish; and if we go contending with God about His sovereignty it will be our eternal ruin. It is absolutely necessary that we should submit to God as an absolute sovereign, and the sovereign of our souls; as one who may have mercy on whom He will have mercy and harden whom He will.” It’s scary to allow God to be like God. But God says, Psalm 46:10, “Be *still*, and know that I am God.” If we find fault with God’s government, we virtually suppose ourselves fit to be God’s counselors. We know better than He does. Job 41:11, “Whatsoever is under the whole heaven is mine.” As He is God, all things are His own, and He has a right to dispose of them according to His own pleasure. All things in this lower world are His. Revelation 6:15–16, “And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, 16 and said to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!”

Though Sovereignty may seem sweet to us, it is only sweet as a result of Jesus Christ. It is impossible for us to look at this attribute of sovereignty with comfort of any kind without Christ the mediator. Sovereignty would be scary to us as well, and maybe it is. Your house, your job, your finances, your intellect, your degree of talent, the boundaries of your home and where you live, your soul, everything – is ordained and structured by the sovereign God of the universe. *The Westminster Confession of Faith* in section 3:1 states, “God, from all eternity, did, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely, and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass.” How can you think sweetly of God’s sovereignty without Christ’s mediation? It can only be a matter of terror and amazement to sinners. Nothing is pleasing to God but in and through Christ, so nothing in God is comfortable to men, or for their eternal good, but as it comes to them through Christ. Imperfect men and women who do not have the blood of the Savior covering them are not pleasing to God. God sees them as, “children of wrath.” God exercises His sovereignty in the eternal salvation of men, or not. He owns the soul. So

we see how absolutely we are dependent on God in the great matter of the eternal salvation of our souls. 1 Timothy 2:5 says, “For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.” For the Christian Christ is the loveliest thought that can be conceived. Song of Solomon 5:16 states, “Yes, he is altogether lovely.” God saves and blesses His people for Christ’s sake. You have to look at sovereignty through Christ and His will for us, only then will it be sweet.

It’s easy to see sovereignty in your own condition, God expects His people to reflect on His sovereignty daily. Genesis teaches us over and over that God is in control. At any moment God could require our lives. He has set a day when our earthly breath will cease. But that is a good thing, from our perspective. God orders such things for us and for our good. Imagine if you were placed in control of your life? What would you first do if God said – *for 5 minutes I will give you complete control over your own life to affect any change that will afterwards remain permanent*. What would you do? Have the perfect body? Become instantly rich and debt free? Be free from any disease or ailment? Do you see how quickly such a thing would become a genie in a bottle of sorts? You wouldn’t be thinking first about how God might be glorified, or how your sanctification in affliction may best glorify Him. You wouldn’t choose to enter into the worst suffering for Christ’s glory. Your thoughts would be to deliver you *from* suffering. We would have carnal thoughts if even a limited amount of sovereignty were placed in our hands – for as the saying goes as it is applied to fallen men, *absolute power corrupts absolutely*. James 4:15 is correct, and instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.” But we do not need three wishes or a genie in a bottle. Romans 8:31 states, “What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?” If you are a Christian, God is *for* you. School tests, employment difficulties, marriage problems, dry personal devotions, the mundane of everyday life – if God is for his people, then there is a treasury of blessings waiting to be poured out on His people at the right time and the right place. But we are impatient. Our plan is better than God’s plan. Our desires fulfilled are better than waiting on God to fill them at the right time. We forget that God is sovereign, and we often find ourselves kicking against the goads. Or becoming like the Stoic who goes through affliction and trial by simply biting our upper lip

and enduring it. Real Christians, really, have no *bad* days. How could they if God has so ordered them for our best and His glory? The sovereignty of God, then, should be sweet to us because 1) The Almighty God of the universe has taken notice of us, and 2) He saved us to give us everything in Christ for our good. We must repent of our rebellion against His will, and His way, and see His sovereignty as sweet.

CHAPTER 4:
GOD, WHO IS HOLY AND RIGHTEOUS

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," (Gen. 1:1).

In considering the doctrine of God as it pertains to *primeval history* and the book of Genesis, we are going to look now at how Genesis demonstrates God as holy and righteous. What does it mean that God is *holy*? Webster's dictionary says it means, "Exalted or worthy of complete devotion as one perfect in righteousness as a divine quality." The Hebrew word we find in Genesis is *qodesh* (ko'–desh) meaning, "apartness, holiness, sacredness, or separateness." Genesis uses a derivative of the word which is, "qadash" (kaw–dash) meaning, "to consecrate, sanctify, prepare, dedicate, be hallowed, be holy, be sanctified, and be separate." Something that is "holy" or "sanctified" is set apart for a special use and admiration. It is that which encompasses everything morally good. It is God's complete and utter separation from any moral defect.

What does it mean that God is righteous? Webster again says, "acting in accord with divine moral law that renders one free from guilt or sin." For God, this means He is consistently Himself as a being who is *right*. By definition, God is perfectly righteous, or perfectly conforming to His own morality and, "rightness." He always does what is consistent with His being as that which is "right." What constitutes that which is right? God's *being* determines what is right. The Hebrew word *tsaddiyq* means, "just and lawful in conduct and character." Listen to what the *Westminster Larger Catechism* question 93 says, "What is the moral law?" "The moral law is the declaration of the will of God…" This Law is an, "exposition," of God's character. It is a description of who He is, the complete commentary on His will. If someone were to keep the Law perfectly they would be like God – perfectly holy. Men *are* to be holy (separated from the things of the world to God) and righteous (following the will of God). Holy is a derivative of what you get when you are perfectly righteous. For God, it is to be consistent with His own character as doing that which is right, and completely separate from sin and evil (or things not in

accordance with His will). That is why the *law* is so important in how men are positioned in relationship to a holy and just God.

We find a demonstration of holiness in sanctification and sacrifice in Genesis chapter 2. Genesis 2:3 is one of the primary places of being sanctified or holy, as it says, “Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.” God *set apart* one day in seven to be sacred. The first day Adam enjoyed when God had created him and placed him in the garden was the seventh day, or the sacred day. That set a *model* for his relationship with a holy God. God appointed it to be kept holy, that man might in it consider the excellency of His works and God’s goodness toward him. When men disobeyed God, and were found wicked, God instituted a system that would allow men to be forgiven for their wickedness. The Gospel itself is stated immediately after the fall. Genesis 3:15 says, “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.” Something will transpire to make these things so. Eve thought, in Genesis 4:1, *the man* (the Messiah) was the one to come, but it was Cain. Little did she know the Messiah would not come for a few thousand years. In the meantime, God allowed men to partake in the ritualistic object lessons of blood sacrifices.

Sacrifice demonstrated substitution. If one sinned, they could offer up a clean animal that God designated to be killed *in their place*, and then the spilt blood of that sacrifice would demonstrate God’s judgment. Sacrifice was necessary because God requires death for those who disobey His law. That was the object lesson itself. Acting contrary to God deserves the destruction of life. He punished those who were disobedient with death. Genesis 2:16–17 teaches, “And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; “but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”“ Transgression against the Law procures death. Death is a just punishment for sin. Imperfection is rebellion. Transgression against a perfect being forfeits His blessing and invokes His cursing. Genesis 4:3–5 shows us this clearly, “And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of

the ground to the LORD. Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering, but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell." Blood was not split in Cain's offering so God did not accept it.[8] Genesis 8:20 also says this as it explains, "Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar." Genesis 22:13 also highlights this when it says, "Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering…" God requires, as a result of his holiness and righteousness, *sacrifice* – something that outwardly demonstrates His judgment and justice on that which transgresses His holy Law.

As a righteous and holy God, He cursed men for sin. Genesis 3:14 says, "So the LORD God said…"Because you have done this, You are cursed…" The serpent, the woman and the man, were cursed as a result of the fall. *All men* are cursed as a result of the fall of Adam, since Adam is our representative. All men are conceived and born wicked as a result. All men are in need of sacrifice and redemption because they are all *evil*. Another way of saying that all men are wicked and evil – and you may be saying, "I'm not wicked and evil" – is simply to say, all men are *imperfect*. All men are not *perfectly holy*. There is only a pass or fail in God's class. God does not grade on a curve. Genesis 4:10–11, "And He said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground. "So now you are cursed from the earth, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand." God *curses* for all eternity that which is *imperfect*.

As a righteous and holy God, He destroyed all of creation because men were evil. Genesis 6:5, "Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." This is a commentary on all men who are conceived and born after the fall of Adam. It applies to *all* men for *all* time born under the fall. Genesis 6:12 says, "So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth." As a result of men's opposite affinity to being righteous, God

must act justly. Men have disobeyed the law, and they must be punished for their disobedience. Remember, He said, *if you disobey you shall surely die*. God is just. He is completely fair. Justice is the practical application of God *being* righteous. Imagine a man convicted of mass murder – and everyone knows it. He knows it, his lawyer knows it, the judge knows it, the jury knows it, and you know it. But even though the jury finds him guilty, the Judge decides upon sentencing that the man is *free to go*. That would be unjust. God must act justly, so imperfect men are judged accordingly. When imperfect people continually demonstrate their imperfection, God must punish them in two ways, 1) in light of their fallen nature as imperfect because of Adam's original sin imputed to them, and 2) to the degree they have sinned against Him in further actual sins against Him. That is what is right. Man's imperfection must be punished justly. If God were to let that slide He would be an unjust God, and if He is an unjust God, then we are all in *grave* trouble. One day He could say one thing and another day change His mind. But God is just, and always acts in accordance with His holy nature. When men break the law, they are punished. And so, after the fall, men became exceedingly wicked, and they were destroyed from the face of the earth; all except one family, those under Noah, who was righteous in his day because he trusted the will of God and believed that God was faithful – *and so God saved him.*

As a Righteous and Holy God, He dispersed the nations because of their proud rebellion. Genesis 11:6–7 tells us of the tower in Babylon, "And the LORD said, "Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. "Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." It is right for God to strip the proud of their pride. Again, they were disobedient to His will which was, "Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it,"" (Genesis 1:28). God literally changed the information in their minds to speak a new language, and scatter them, so that they would *think to speak* to one another differently. But they were disobedient to His will to fill the earth. They were to *go*, not to *come* together to build a tower.

As a righteous and holy God, He blessed and cursed people in reaction to how they treated His chosen people. Genesis 12:3 says, “I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” And as a result of Pharaoh’s cursing of Abram, Genesis 12:17 says, “But the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram’s wife.” God was just to do it.

As a righteous and holy God, He refused to destroy the innocent with the wicked. He is just and He is fair. Genesis 18:23–26 states, “And Abraham came near and said, “Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked? “Suppose there were fifty righteous within the city; would You also destroy the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous that were in it? “Far be it from You to do such a thing as this, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked; far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?” So the LORD said, “If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes.” Only one was found. He spared Lot but still destroyed the city. God *is* fair.

As a righteous and holy God, He dealt with Abimelech justly. Genesis 20:3–6, “But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, “Indeed you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is a man’s wife.” But Abimelech had not come near her; and he said, “Lord, will You slay a righteous nation also? “Did he not say to me, ‘She is my sister’? And she, even she herself said, ‘He is my brother.’ In the integrity of my heart and innocence of my hands I have done this.” And God said to him in a dream, “Yes, I know that you did this in the integrity of your heart. For I also withheld you from sinning against Me; therefore I did not let you touch her.”

God is so just and fair in His dealing with people, and with nations, He makes things right for others. As a righteous and holy God, He made things right for Leah and Rachel and for Jacob in his work with Laban. Genesis 29:31–32, “When the LORD saw that Leah was unloved, He opened her womb; but Rachel was barren. So Leah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Reuben; for she said, “The LORD has

surely looked on my affliction. Now therefore, my husband will love me." He makes things *right* for people when they are wronged. Even for Rachel, Genesis 30:22–23, "Then God remembered Rachel, and God listened to her and opened her womb. And she conceived and bore a son, and said, "God has taken away my reproach." Even with Jacob against Laban, who had enslaved Jacob, Genesis 31:12 says, "And He said, Lift your eyes now and see, all the rams which leap on the flocks are streaked, speckled, and gray–spotted; for I have seen all that Laban is doing to you." God gave Jacob a blessing for his indentured servitude. And God so blessed Jacob that Laban was jealous of Jacob's blessing and wealth.

As a righteous and holy God, He made things right for Joseph, and disciplined those who were guilty of evil. Genesis 37:5, "Now Joseph had a dream, and he told it to his brothers; and they hated him even more." Do you remember of the dream of the stalks bowing before Joseph? They hated his blessings and his seeming pride. Genesis 37:28 then says what they did to him, "Then Midianite traders passed by; so the brothers pulled Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt." They got rid of him *for a few dollars*. But then we find Joseph in Genesis 41:41–42, "And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt." Then Pharaoh took his signet ring off his hand and put it on Joseph's hand; and he clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck." Joseph went from a slave, to the prisons, to be elevated to the highest man in the land. Why? Genesis 50:20 explains, "But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive." The preservation of the family in that narrative was God's sovereign and holy purpose.

So there are all sorts of examples like this throughout Genesis. We find that all God's actions with His creatures are holy and righteousness. It is just for a holy and righteous God to condemn men for disobedience. How much sin are men really guilty of? How much do they really do in 80 years of their life? How many, really, bad things do men do? From the time they are little to the time they are buried in the casket, how many sins do they *really* commit? Yet, it's not about the *total number* of bad things, but rather the *state* in which men are born. They are born

fallen in nature due to the fall of Adam. Their further actions simply compound their guilt. Adam was the representative for all men, and Adam was in covenant with God on behalf of all men. Adam was responsible for his actions, and in this way responsible for the consequences of those actions for all men. Adam attained for all mankind *imperfection*. The imperfection attained is considered by God to be like a broken vessel or vase that cannot be useful. Something imperfect is *defective*. There is no recovery for that which falls below the standard of God's perfect holiness. One may not *like* the idea that Adam was our representative. But that calls into question God's wisdom in placing Adam in the garden *as* our representative. To question God is tantamount to being atheistically minded. It is practical atheism in action.

How do imperfect, defective men which God designates *sinners*, get right with God? They don't. They don't have the ability to be perfect after being imperfect. That is why we find such a commentary on the nature of men; this disposition enacted the *flood which would destroy the earth*. Genesis 6:5 says, "Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Out of the being of a man come his desires. "Every" intent was evil. Not some, not a few or a couple, but *every* one of them. Men must be *made* righteous by God. For God, "imperfection," is the same as saying something is *evil* because it presupposes that men did something that was not in accordance with what God commands them to do. And when men sin, they compound their guilt by sinning against an infinitely holy God on top of being completed defective due to original sin. People often say, "It's not fair that God sends to hell people for all eternity, to burn under His wrath, who just sin for 80 years." But even though *finite* men sin, each individual sin against God is *infinite* because it is a sin against an *infinite* God who is *infinitely* angry with every sin against his *infinite holiness and infinite righteousness*. Imperfection against God, transgression or sin against God, is infinitely punishable. Men's obligation to love, honor, and obey a holy God is in proportion to His holiness, not the *size* of their sin humanly speaking. And if men are set in this imperfect state at birth, and all the thoughts of his heart are only evil continually, then men are constantly wicked in the eyes of God unless something happens to them that *God* initiates. Since they are continually

wicked, they cannot do *any* good before Him. That means God must do something *to them* in order to see a change in them.

In order for God to successfully interact with fallen men in a manner holy and righteous, God provided a Mediator to save some of mankind. God is not only holy, *but holy, holy, holy*, and must be appeased and satisfied by sacrifice. “And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory,” (Isaiah 6:3). Sacrifice, then, is *essential*. Imperfect sacrifices do not save, they only placated God’s judgment for a time. Atonement is needed for sinful men to approach a holy God. Exodus 29:36 says, “And you shall offer a bull every day as a sin offering for atonement. You shall cleanse the altar when you make atonement for it, and you shall anoint it to sanctify it.” Every day they were to do it. Every day they had to go and offer sacrifice. Why did they need to do this so *monotonously*? Exodus 39:30 says, “Then they made the plate of the holy crown of pure gold, and wrote on it an inscription like the engraving of a signet: HOLINESS TO THE LORD.” The ceremonial law *pointed* to Jesus Christ, God’s *one true mediator*. This sacrificial system is fulfilled completely by Christ. Hebrews 9:24–28 states, “For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another – He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.” The prophecy of Genesis 3:15 to *remedy* the fall is found *in* Christ. “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel,” (Gen. 3:15). Paul explains with commentary this passage in 1 Corinthians 15:22, “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.” You are either in Adam exposed in your sin, or you are in Christ with a covering over you by virtue of *His* blood. Romans 5:14–15 says, “Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of

the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many." So it is through Christ, being the Mediator of the covenant, that salvation is found, revealed and promised in Genesis 3:15. Hebrews 9:15 confirms this, "He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance." Hebrews 8:6 gives the difference between the *Covenant of Works* and the *Covenant of Grace* that Christ fulfilled, "But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises."[9] Faith like that of *Abraham* (an Old Testament saint) is required to take hold of such a salvation. Galatians 3:8, "And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed." Galatians 3:9 explains, "To then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham." It is only through the Mediator that one can be found or reckoned righteous in the sight of a righteous God. The blood of Christ is like an umbrella that covers us. So God looking down from heaven, to use the simile, either sees one of two things. Either He sees our unrighteous and evil nature, or He sees Christ as the umbrella which covers us. Romans 5:1, "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." This is the only way a sinner may have peace with a holy and righteous God.

There is for us an application of God's holiness and righteousness to sinners and Christians. Sinners without Christ who die in their original sin nature and actual committed sins are doomed to hell. It is just and righteous for God to eternally reject and infinitely *torture* sinners under His holy anger and displeasure for being sinful. That would be in accordance with His own word which stated, *surely you shall die*. This is not simply a reference to physical death, but spiritual death and eternal residence in hell under His fury. Without a Mediator, sinners are in danger of eternal torment under the wrath of God. They stand now, under Adam's curse, to bear all the responsibility of the fall as if they committed the act themselves. That is how God treats unrepentant *sinners*. Right now, God's

wrath still abides upon them, just as if they ate the fruit. God, as holy and righteous who knows how wicked they are in their thoughts, actions and speech, sets His condemnation against them. God is able to dispose of them as He would like. What will He do with them? What do you think He will do to them?

Maybe you are a sinner in need of Christ and are afraid of eternal torment? You have good reason to be afraid. With all those who perished in the flood, you will reside there eternally and that will be your eternal inheritance if you do not repent and change your ways. Everyone who perished in the flood, though, knows that eternal damnation is very horrifying, but they also know it is also *just*, and they hate God all the more in hell right now *knowing* that God *is* just. Deuteronomy 32:22 says, "For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell…" God may simply give you over to your own life, to live your life as you see fit, and in the end He will be to you dreadfully righteous, and fearfully holy. You will not be able to bear it, but God will be just in executing his fury upon you. And if you do not see this dread, it simply demonstrates all the more that you still hold in your bosom, a heart that hates the ways of God and His law. This is much like Cain who despised God's ways and substituted his own ways, and then became jealous of Abel who followed God's commands. If every sin is *infinitely* punished in hell's torments, imagine the agony that you would bear just from the sins you committed *over the last week*. You suffer for Adam's transgression credited to your account, and you compound that guilt to be punished for all your own actual sins *as well*. God will not spare the least amount of judgment because He is righteous and must punish sin to the degree it deserves. That means hell will be hell for Adolph Hitler, and hell will also be hell for every unbeliever who rejected the truth. Both experience hell to the degree that justice is afforded them. But, in order to escape this, it is not simply mustering up a desire to get out of hell for free. There is a huge difference between not wanting to go to hell and desiring to receive Christ as Savior. Christ fulfilled all the righteous requirements of the law so that men may be saved. Everything Adam failed in, God accomplished in Christ. All men are not saved. Only those who trust in the work of Christ the Redeemer, the seed of the woman who crushes the head of the serpent, are saved. It is a change from trusting that you are OK, to believing that you are very

much in danger of hell which could be thrust on you at any moment, to trusting in what Christ did to fulfill the Law in doing what you cannot. He was holy so that men may be holy through Him. Only Christ, without sin, can fulfill *perfectly* the righteous Law of God. Imperfect sinners must turn to Him and receive His pardon and His grace, and His work that the righteousness of God would be fulfilled for them as a covering. He not only fulfilled the Law, but sacrificed Himself for His people that they would be covered, no longer by animal's blood, but by an eternally sufficient covering made by the infinite Son of God. By trusting Christ, you are in fact saying, "I am a wicked sinner. I am not good. The thoughts of my heart are only evil continually, and I need a Savior to rescue me from the wrath of God."

What if you are a redeemed sinner or professing Christian? For those redeemed, they have the blood of Christ as a covering that they may commune with the holy and righteous God. God will only commune with one who is *perfect*. Sin makes men guilty before God, to be eternally condemned. That is why Christians look to Christ and His blood. They are covered and wrapped in His robe of righteousness. *The Westminster Confession of Faith* says, "Christ, by his mediation, hath procured redemption, with all other benefits of the covenant of God's grace. We are made partakers of the benefits which Christ hath procured, by the application of them unto us, which is the work especially of God the Holy Spirit. Redemption is certainly applied, and effectually communicated, to all those for whom Christ hath purchased it; who are in time by the Holy Ghost enabled to believe in Christ according to the gospel." When Adam and Eve sinned, they covered themselves – they were naked. God made them a covering by sacrificing an animal on their behalf and as an object lesson in blood. What was done to the animal should have been done to them. But God was gracious to them and gave them a temporary substitute. Christians have a covering as well. Revelation 7:14 says, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Ephesians 2:13 states, "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ." 1 John 1:7 speaks about the *blood* of Christ in this way, "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son

cleanses us from all sin." Christ fulfilled three things for Christians who look to Him by faith – He was a Mediator, a peace–maker, to take away the enmity between us and God and reconcile us to God. He was a Priest and victim, to substitute Himself in our place. And He made an atonement, by enduring the legal ramifications of the Law for us in the great Law court of Christ. Think about what happened on the cross – the displeasure of God on Christ was *infinite*. The anger of hell was on Him as He died for His people. He did not deserve to die, but laid down His life as an infinite sacrifice before God on behalf of those for whom He died. In Christ, two natures were necessary for making atonement: a human nature, to suffer, and a divine nature, to give the infinite value for the sacrifice which God desired in His sufferings. *God* saved his people from His holy and righteous indignation, by His righteousness *for* holiness.

Through Christ, if you are a professing Christian, you are *able* to be holy. Christ gives His people the *ability* to be holy. You can be holy, or not, if you want to. 1 Timothy 6:18 says we ought to be *rich* in this way, "Let them do good, that they be rich in good works." And God tells us in Genesis 17:1, "I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless." Holiness is sometimes hard because our flesh and our desires thirst after *sin* instead of pleasing Christ. 1 Thessalonians 4:3 explains that sanctification is our divine prerogative, "For this is the will of God, your sanctification." This ought to be your continued holy resolve. It is the further separation of your life from the ways of the world. And this is accomplished through the power of the Holy Spirit who is sent of God and Christ for our help. "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you," (Rom. 8:9).

I said before that God can only commune with that which is perfect. You might be thinking, "As a professing Christian I am not perfect, thus, God cannot commune with me." That's missing the point altogether. Imperfect sinners covered with Christ's blood are seen as perfectly holy in the eyes of God's redemptive purpose. So even though you are working to be more righteous day by day, demonstrating sanctification, in the eyes of God you cannot be more accepted by God than you are right now in Christ. God communes with His people when they come in the blood of the Lamb. We come boldly before the throne of

grace not because we are filled with pride, but because we are accepted in the Beloved. Though we are imperfect, Christ mediates for us and we are accepted as if we are perfectly righteous *in Christ*.

How do you demonstrate your holiness when you are alone, or when you are with others? What do you do when the dirty joke is said in your presence? What do you do when lewd talking occurs at work? What do you do when you watch TV and something inappropriate pops on the screen, even in a commercial? What entertains you? What is most fun to you? Do you love to be entertained more than you love to commune with God? Christians have been born of God to *holiness* and that is a far cry from the way the world lives. Jonathan Edwards said, "Let all who profess themselves Christians take heed that they do not defile themselves and profane their sacred character." Many times people join the military not because they want to be soldier, but because they simply want to be seen in the *uniform.* As a Christian, God's name is now attached to you. In every area of your life seek to uphold that holy name as a badge of honor. You cannot be a saint in church on Sunday and a devil the rest of the week. God is not to be compartmentalized. You cannot live your life one way and then offer only a portion, a sliver, to being, "Christian." Holiness should be the hub of our life where everything else extends. Whatever context you live in, the holiness of God and the reputation you have as a Christian before Him should be *of prime importance*.

CHAPTER 5:
GOD, THE GOOD GOD

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," (Gen. 1:1).

The book of Genesis demonstrates God as *good*. Question: What does it mean to be good? Dictionary definitions are always helpful; Webster defines "good" as anything, "virtuous, righteous and commendable." We may have what we consider to be good food, good friends, a good car, a good house, *etc*., things that have certain admirable qualities. But this is not the same as the goodness of God.

The goodness of God is that where in His self–manifestation, He is thought of in two ways: 1) absolutely and in Himself as supremely good and perfect, and the only good because He is good originally, perfectly, and immutably that way; but also, because He is: 2) outwardly good as beneficent towards His creatures. He is good inwardly and outwardly.

In the first way, God is good in *being*. That simply means, what is right according to His character. God is benevolent generally in His indiscriminate providence over the earth. The sun still shines and the moon stills revolves around the earth – those are *good* acts. This means God does not act with evil or malice. Inwardly He always acts according to His nature.

In the second way that God is good, it extends to His creatures in three different ways, preservation, providence and election. First, He preserves both man and beast in their stations of life. Cows, bugs, birds, men, children, whales, *etc*., are all upheld and exist by His power. Everything "indeed was very good" when He created everything. Even after the fall, cows do not become bad, they are still upheld in their nature as a created entity. God continues to sustain them. Even wicked men are upheld in their beings. God does not instantaneously destroy humankind. In His indiscriminate providence He makes apples grow on trees and

people eat those apples; the rain falls and the sun shines. God, in making apples, is *good*. Making apples is *not* evil.

Lastly, He communicates His goodness to His elect. Abraham was called *a friend* of God. God communicated His goodness to Abraham so Abraham could receive the greatest amount of happiness he was capable of receiving at the time. The goodness of God produces all the happiness to be gained in the entire universe, and this is the view of Genesis 1–2, when it records that God, "saw it was good." In the manner in which a good God relates to those who are not elect, they are given good things, but the intention behind those things is of another design. God gave Esau a father (and that was a good thing) a home (and that was a good thing) a mother (and that was a good thing) a brother (and that was a good thing), family, talents, livestock, as a matter of fact, *everything*. But Esau was not one of God's elect. The ultimate disparity of the event of Esau's non–election, then, demonstrates the intention of God in giving Esau good things. Their intention is a far different thing for *him* than Jacob's good things, which we will look at in later chapters. For Esau, those good things were a further aggravation of his decent into the fury of hell.

So, the goodness of God serves two functions among the divine perfections of God. First, it demonstrates His being. Second, it is the primary affection of God's divine will.

Make this notation – *all happiness comes from God*. Such happiness is to manifest His glory. It is to demonstrate the highest moral excellence that His creatures should desire. It is to give His elect (and the renewed creation) the highest attainment of blessedness in Him that they could receive. Does *primeval history* teach *this* about God?

God created everything as good and affirmed afterwards that it was in fact *good*. Genesis 1:4 says, "And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness." He did this with the earth and sea, trees that yield fruit, the sun and the moon, all the sea creatures, the beast of the field, everything. Genesis 1:31 says, "Then God saw everything that he had made, and indeed it was very good." Everything God initially made, before sin entered the world, was *very good*. There was, at this time, nothing that existed that was not good

(which is an amazing thought). Later, the iniquity of pride will be found in the angel Lucifer, who would be cast from heaven along with all those angels who rebelled against God, then transmitted that deception of pride to Adam and Eve. And that which was very good, became very bad *to them.*

God also corrects that which is not good. Things not complete, or that could not receive the highest degree of happiness He would make "more good." Genesis 2:18 says, "And the LORD God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him." It was not good for man to be alone. Everything done up to this point was perfect, but God had not finished his creation. There was something missing. This does not mean that Adam's moments of solitude were evil, but rather that they were incomplete (*not* imperfect). So in finishing creation, He gave Adam his wife, and completed creation.

God commands men to do good. Genesis 2:16–17 says, "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." It was good to tell Adam not to eat of the wrong tree and eat of the right tree. This is not grace, this is the goodness of God extending the happiness of the creature. Genesis 4:7 says, "If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it." He desires all that which is good and wants Cain to do well. Simply because men fall, God will not stop talking to men as if they are not fallen. Even though men fall, He still speaks to them as those who must do good out of a perfectly righteous heart.

God opposes everything that is not good. Listen to Genesis 6:5–7, "Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the LORD was sorry that he had made man on the earth, and he was grieved in his heart. So the LORD said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them." He destroyed the opposition to that which is good. Genesis 48:15–16 says, "And he blessed

Joseph, and said: “God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, The God who has fed me all my life long to this day, The Angel who has redeemed me from all evil, Bless the lads; Let my name be named upon them, And the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; And let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.”

God provides good rewards to His servants. Genesis 30:20 says, “And Leah said, “God has endowed me with a good endowment; now my husband will dwell with me, because I have born him six sons.” So she called his name Zebulun.” Genesis 26:28 says, “But they said, “We have certainly seen that the LORD is with you,” referencing Isaac and Abimelech. God *Himself* is their exceedingly great reward.

God decrees goodness as the final outcome of His works. Genesis 50:20 says, “But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.” Though evil is in the world, God still decrees goodness as the final outcome to *all* His good works (*cf*. Romans 8:28).

So we now consider more formally, the doctrine of God’s goodness communicated to His creatures. The *Westminster Confession’s Shorter* (and *Larger*) *Catechism* says, “Q4: What is God? A4: God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.” Where is *love*? Isn’t the mantra of most churches today that *God is love*? Love does not come in until later when it is *covenantal*. God is good, He *is* goodness, and that is a different relationship to being *loving*, which is reserved for those He sets His *special* affection on. When dealing with “goodness” we are talking about indiscriminate actions over all creation that are consistent with His being. God is not an uncontrollable wave of goodness that splashes upon everything and everyone without any rhyme or reason. When dealing with *love*, this applies to His special considerations to his elect *in Christ*.

God is indiscriminately and providentially good to everything in His preserving and directing of all things. This is the relationship of God to His objects in the created order. Psalm 145:9 says, “The LORD is good to all, And his tender mercies are over all his works.” God’s work over all creation demonstrates His indiscriminate providence for creation itself in

which He follows all things. He preserves them in their being. He continues the species of all things. He concurs with them in their distinct offices. He opens the womb that they may reproduce. God is not the great watchmaker who makes the watch, winds it up and lets it go. Christians are not deists.

God is *not* redemptively good to everyone. The Psalmist says, "Truly God is good to Israel, to such as are pure in heart." Romans 2:4 says, "Or do you despise the riches of his goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?" Jews, who judge Gentile transgressions, will be condemned not merely because they judge Gentiles but because they practice the very evils that they criticize. In Romans 2:1 Paul reminds the Jews in verses 2–5 of truths they should know. God's judgment of the Jews is righteous and according to the truth, for surely He cannot spare them for violating the Torah (verse 2). The Jews should hardly think that their covenantal and ethnic status will spare them from God's wrath, for then the worst sort of antinomianism would be permissible (verses 3–4). This is shown in direct violation of the Law, which is God's special revelation to them in verse 4. Persistence in evil reveals a disobedient heart that is destined to experience God's eschatological wrath on the Day of the Lord (verse 5).

God does *not* save everyone, and *in this way* He is not good to everyone. Proverbs 16:4, "The LORD has made all for Himself, Yes, even the wicked for the day of doom." So we really have the problem of *pleasure*. Stop talking about how God ought to be good to everyone. God is not obliged to do *anything*. Fallen, wicked man deserves hell. Pain, suffering, evils in this life are things men deserve to experience due to the fall. But still, in the midst of the fall, in the midst of the evil that surrounds us day in and day out there is still found the experience of *pleasure*. The problem is not pain and suffering – that's easy – it's a result of the fall. Many philosophers say, "Because God is good, then He is not all powerful, and if He is not all powerful, then He is not good." Suffering is not compatible with an omnipotent good God. If God were good and omnipotent, He would never allow suffering. But the answer to the problem of suffering and wickedness in the world is the problem of sin, and sin has been decreed by God to bring about certain glorifying purposes

to His end. If there were no suffering or evil in a world riddled with sin, then there would be a problem. *The real problem is why there is pleasure.* Men ought to be constantly amazed that in a sin riddled world, there is still the outward, temporary acts of pleasure. Ask any adulterer if sex is pleasurable. Ask any food addict if ice cream is pleasurable. People love pleasure. America is characterized by being overly entertained which is *pleasurable*. But how can there be pleasure in a sinful world? It is because creation was originally shaped by a good God, and remnants of that goodness remain very evident. For men, though, this pleasure turns against them if the good things God created are used for selfish and wicked ends. In other words, anything that men do that is not primarily for the glory of the Creator is sin, even though they find pleasure in it, and it will be, for them, *an eternal curse*.

Good things that are abused by wicked men is what the Bible calls, "Filling up the measure of sin." God uses these good things He has placed in this world as that which prepares wicked men for the pit of hell. God *prepares* men to glorify Him there. While men continue in sin, they are filling up the measure which is set for them. It is as if a cracked and dirty glass represents man (the dirty glass being original sin), and the water poured into it are actual sins. This is the work in which they spend their whole lives. They begin in their childhood; and if they live to grow old in sin, they still go on with this work. It is the work with which every day is filled up. They fill up their sins before God, until God says, "enough," and then requires their life to be judged. 1 Thessalonians 2:16 says, "so as always to fill up the measure of their sins; but wrath has come upon them to the uttermost." They *always* exist to fill up the measure of their sins. And Genesis 15:16 says, "But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete." There is a certain level with which God will put up with the sin of the Amorites. So the pleasure that wicked men find as good and hearty, are really used by God in their lives as that which compounds their guilt, and heaps up wrath for the day of wrath. The disparity of that event of damnation proves the intention of God's will for them.

In juxtaposition, God is proactively good to His elect. Good things for the elect *are* good things. He privileges His elect with spiritual

and saving blessings in a very special manner. He pardons their iniquities. Psalm 25:11 says, “For Your name’s sake, O LORD, Pardon my iniquity, for it is great.” God heals their spiritual diseases. Isaiah 53:5, “But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by his stripes we are healed.” He sanctifies their nature, Leviticus 21:23, “for I the LORD sanctify them.” God hears and answers their prayers. Genesis 30:6 says, “Then Rachel said, “God has judged my case; and he has also heard my voice and given me a son.” He bears with their infirmities. Matthew 12:20, “A bruised reed he will not break, and smoking flax he will not quench, Till he sends forth justice to victory.” He accepts worship from them. John 4:23 says, “But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.” He supports them and delivers them from temptations. Hebrews 4:15 states, “For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.” 2 Peter 2:9 says, “Then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations.” God directs and guides them in their difficulties. Psalm 23:3, “he restores my soul; he leads me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.” Psalm 23:6, “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever.” In his goodness He desires to impart Himself freely to His people. By identifying God as good, Scriptures sets Him utterly apart from all malice, cruelty, and harshness, then shows Him to be kind, liberal, worthy of trust, and full of grace towards His people. He is *unchangeably* good. Ultimately love, grace, mercy, long–suffering are all gracious affections that flow from the goodness of God to His elect people. They are irrevocable, and cannot change because God cannot change.

Let’s look at an application of applying that God is good to us. First we will compare God’s goodness to men’s goodness. Human beings are considered comparable to God’s goodness in three ways: When human nature is considered in itself, it is good as with the rest of the created order – but God allows creation to mimic the attribute of “goodness” because creation was created *by Him.* When goodness is considered in its present condition as fallen, it is utterly depraved and falls under Christ’s condemnation, that none are good, no not one, except for God alone. For

example, Romans 11:22, “Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in his goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off.” Yet, human beings *can* be considered good in and through the redemptive work of Christ, where their image is restored, if they are born again. This is not something for men to boast in, for the restored image is wholly the work of Christ and communicated to us through the Spirit (John 3:3). This is even represented to us in the crown of thorns (a picture of the fall) on the head of Christ on the cross. Christ redeems *groaning creation* from the fall as well as His elect. Thorns represent the curse described in Genesis 3. Even creation must be renewed. Everything, then, is only good as it relates to God, and as God communicates goodness to His people. Humans must, then, search for that which is good in God and Christ alone. They must get an interest in God.

Are you searching for the *highest good*? The good to be *desired* is only found in God and through Christ, communicated to us by the Holy Spirit. It is that which is good in and of itself which is *also* good for everyone. God enjoys His own good, and desires to communicate that good to His people. God alone is the good to be enjoyed. Everything that is enjoyed is enjoyed because it is good in relationship to the *Giver* of good things. The goodness of God is to be desired because in and of itself it *should be desired* as the highest good. Matthew 19:16–17 says, “Now behold, one came and said to Him, “Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?” So he said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.” The outward appearance of doing good things does not make one good; this was the *mistake* of the rich man. Only God *is* good; God is good before He has done anything good. We are to have a desire after Christ with interest in Him as the *Highest Good*. This goodness alone is able to satisfy the soul of redeemed men. It satisfies the appetite of the hungry Christian. Psalm 145:16–19, “You open Your hand And satisfy the desire of every living thing. The LORD is righteous in all His ways, Gracious in all His works. The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth. He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He also will hear their cry and save them.” It *continues* to satisfy the Christian. Rhetorically Isaiah 55:2 says, “Why do

you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And let your soul delight itself in abundance." God is talking about Himself. The soul should satisfy itself in God alone.

God is causally good to us. He works all goodness in us. *The Westminster Confession of Faith* 16:3 says, "Their ability to do good works is not at all of themselves, but wholly from the Spirit of Christ. And that they may be enabled thereunto, beside the graces they have already received, there is required an actual influence of the same Holy Spirit, to work in them to will, and to do, of his good pleasure: yet are they not hereupon to grow negligent, as if they were not bound to perform any duty unless upon a special motion of the Spirit; but they ought to be diligent in stirring up the grace of God that is in them." We should be stirring up works looking to the goodness of God. Jesus says in John 15:4–5, "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing." He works all goodness for us and He does good to us. Romans 8:31–32 says, "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things." "All things" are everything we need to fulfill the call of the Gospel on our life and our salvation.

God is to be loved, honored, praised, and served by us *because* He is the highest good. Psalm 107:32 says, "Let them exalt Him also in the assembly of the people, and praise Him in the company of the elders." Psalm 31:19, "Oh, how great is Your goodness, Which You have laid up for those who fear You, Which You have prepared for those who trust in You In the presence of the sons of men!" Psalm 65:11 says, "You crown the year with Your goodness, And Your paths drip with abundance."

What does having a knowledge of God's goodness give us? It gives us direction. God is the *only* and *proper* object of our love and admiration. We recognize and are made aware of what is good and what should be done according to God's nature. We know that in difficulties

God’s goodness will be a support to us knowing He works all things for the good of those who love him, who are called according to His purpose. God’s goodness demonstrates to us the evil and wickedness in all sinful acts. Is God good to you? Why do you think so? Are afflictions good to you? Are difficulties good for you? Realistically suffering, affliction, and difficulties will press us to consider whether we *really* believe God is good or not.

CHAPTER 6:
GOD, THE GRACIOUS GOD

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," (Gen. 1:1).

As Genesis begins this way, and we've seen, it demonstrates that God *is* righteous, holy, good, and sovereign and now we look to see that He is *gracious*. The book of Genesis demonstrates God as gracious over and over again. What is grace? Grace is unmerited divine converting and sanctifying power given to fallen humans for their regeneration, justification, sanctification and glorification. That's not in Webster's dictionary. That is an amalgamation from Genesis. Grace is for *fallen* human beings. When God communicates this to His elect, He is conceived as willing to communicate Himself to the fallen creature from gratuitous love without any merit in the creature, and in reality, despite the creature's *demerit*. No matter how fallen that elect sinner is, God is gracious to that fallen creature.

What does it mean for God to be *gracious*? God is seen as gracious in two ways to His elect people: when His people stand *objectively* related to His graciousness, He bestows all things liberally upon them in showing favor or benevolence. This is the favor by which He elected His people. This is their *predestination* in Him. Or it is receiving His people as accepted in Christ. Second, it is what God gives His people, as what He works in them effectively. He works in them regeneration, faith, hope and love. This is redemption applied to His elect individually. God has provided us with many instances of this all through Genesis concerning His people. Consider the following gracious acts of God to His people.

God provided the good news of the coming kingdom and Messiah for sinners. The Gospel is preached for the first time in Genesis 3:15, "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." This is the echo of the Gospel. In theology we call it the

"*protoevangelium*" or the "before Gospel" from a literal Latin translation. Here it demonstrates the manner in which the Gospel would take place, and the kingdom ushered in. From the Mediator, God's *man*, He would come to destroy the work of the devil, sin, and the fall. Interestingly, God is speaking this wonderful verse in the earshot of Adam and Eve, but directly to the serpent.

God provided atonement (the skins of the animals he slayed for Adam and Eve) for sinners. It says in Genesis 3:21, "Also for Adam and his wife the LORD God made tunics of skin, and clothed them." At this point God could have ended, and been *done* with men, justly. Remember, God is not obliged to save anyone, ever. Yet, He was gracious, and provided atonement by killing and sacrificing two *good* creatures for their sin. He used their skins to clothe them. These are coverings given for fallen sinners.

God gave grace to Noah in Genesis 6:7–8, "So the LORD said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them." But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD." The Hebrew idea "*to find"* is like something fell on Noah that he was not expecting. God's grace *fell* on Noah, and Noah *recognized* that grace. Hebrews 11:7, "By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith." God has saved Noah, and a matter of fact, in Genesis 8, when Noah was on the ark, God "remembered Noah." Genesis 8:1 says, "Then God *remembered* Noah, and every living thing, and all the animals that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters subsided." Peter says in 2 Peter 2:5 that God, "saved Noah…" in this act. Remembering and saving are synonymous inside the context of God's grace.

God's *Covenant of Grace* is gracious. How does God begin with establishing the *Covenant of Grace* with Adam, Noah, or even Abram? By *condescension*. How does God begin establishing this covenant? He says in Genesis 15:1, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your

exceedingly great reward." When He deals covenantally by bringing "covenant" to them, He tells them that, "He himself," is the reward. Then Genesis 15:18, "On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram." God is the reward, and on that day He condescended to bring Abram grace in that covenant. Genesis 17:2 says, "And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly." God brings it to him. Genesis 17:7 says the covenant is unilateral, "And *I* will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you." Abraham did not earn it or ask for it. God established it. Then He requires obedience of Abraham after establishing it. Genesis 17:13 states, "He who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money must be circumcised, and My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant." The sign of this covenant will be in their flesh. This is not something God brought up for a time, but it is *everlasting*. Yet, it is fulfilled, later, in the Mediator of Genesis 3:15.

God, the Creator of the universe, remembered Abraham in Genesis 19:29, "And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when He overthrew the cities in which Lot had dwelt." God is a God who remembers His people and takes notice of them.

God provided *grace* in the wilderness among enemies in Genesis 21:33, "Then Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba, and there called on the name of the LORD, the Everlasting God." Even in the wilderness, among the barren plains, God gave Abraham grace and calls Abraham *the friend of God* in this way.

God preserves the righteous in the *Covenant of Grace* in Genesis 19:21–22, "And he said to him, "See, I have favored you concerning this thing also, in that I will not overthrow this city for which you have spoken. "Hurry, escape there. For I cannot do anything until you arrive there." Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar." When Lot left and escaped, God demonstrates that He will preserve them even amidst trials and difficulties.

God intervened with His people when they failed as in Genesis 12:17, “But the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram’s wife.” Abraham lied but God *still* ultimately honored Him, not for the lie, but for his place in the Covenant of Grace. Also, see Genesis 20:6, “And God said to him in a dream, “Yes, I know that you did this in the integrity of your heart. For I also withheld you from sinning against Me; therefore I did not let you touch her.” He protects His people as He did with Sarai. And, Genesis 26:22, “And he moved from there and dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it. So he called its name Rehoboth, because he said, “For now the LORD has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land.” Isaac had gone from place to place to settle, but God helps him in digging a well amidst his enemies. So Isaac praises God for His gracious provision.

God gave the promise to Jacob, in spite of his sin as a *deceiver* in Genesis 28:3, “May God Almighty bless you, And make you fruitful and multiply you…” And also in Genesis 28:13, “And behold, the LORD stood above it and said: “I am the LORD God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants.” So He blessed and gave promises to Jacob, although Jacob *was* a deceiver and a liar. It is easy to see why God hated Esau, but it is even more difficult to see why God *loved* Jacob.

God’s angels preserved His servant in Genesis 28:16, “Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, “Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it.” God was attending him even in his ignorance. And also Genesis 32:1–2, “So Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. When Jacob saw them, he said, “This is God’s camp.” And he called the name of that place Mahanaim.” God even sends His angels graciously to help His elect servants.

God gave children and bounty to His servant in Genesis 33:5. “And he lifted his eyes and saw the women and children, and said, “Who are these with you?” So he said, “The children whom God has graciously given your servant.” Laban was amazed at the blessing of Jacob’s children and family. And also Genesis 33:11 concerning Jacob’s run–in with Esau, “Please, take my blessing that is brought to you, because God has dealt

graciously with me, and because I have enough." So he urged him, and he took it." Jacob was giving a bountiful gift because God graciously dealt with His elect servant in material goods.

God's grace was desired and used for blessing others in Genesis 43:29, "Then he lifted his eyes and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, "Is this your younger brother of whom you spoke to me?" And he said, "God be gracious to you, my son." This is when Joseph had seen his younger brother and blessed him by God's grace.

So we find simple examples of various gracious acts to Gods' elect servants. Yet all these examples are set amidst the *Covenant of Grace*. God is gracious by *means* of *covenant*. The *Covenant of Grace* is God voluntarily condescending to us. This means God descended lower than He was in relationship to humankind to reach down to us. *The Westminster Confession of Faith* in 7:1 says, "The distance between God and the creature is so great, that although reasonable creatures do owe obedience unto him as their Creator, yet they could never have any fruition of him as their blessedness and reward, but by some voluntary condescension on God's part, which he hath been pleased to express by way of covenant." So God is gracious when He *makes* this covenant, and *keeps* His covenant with us. God is the great Promise Keeper. Men are in no way promise keepers. They continually break their promises and abandon God's commandments in light of the gaze of God's omniscient holy eye. God *alone* promises and keeps covenant in Christ and through Christ for His people.

The *Covenant of Grace* is a gratuitous pact entered into between *God and Christ*. It is *applied* to man by God even though man has offended God. The author of this covenant is God. *The Westminster Confession of Faith* in 7:3 says, "Man, by his fall, having made himself incapable of life by that covenant, the Lord was pleased to make a second, commonly called the *Covenant of Grace*; wherein he freely offereth unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ; requiring of them faith in him, that they may be saved, and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto eternal life his Holy Spirit, to make them willing, and able to believe." In this covenant that God makes *through* Christ, the contracting parties are

God offended and man offending. Sin abolished the natural union created initially with the Creator and the creature (God and Adam in the *Covenant of Works*). Man is not simply seen here as a creature, but as a *fallen* sinful creature that is dead in sin, helpless to spiritual good, a child of wrath, and alienated from God and life in Him. God condescends to bring those kinds of men into grace with Him. He does that as stated in Genesis 3:15, through the Mediator of the covenant who is Jesus Christ, the promised seed of the woman. In the first covenant, the *Covenant of Works* with Adam, there is no need of a mediator. But now, as a result of sin, no covenant could be enacted without a Mediator for men on account of God's holiness and justice, and man's inherent sinfulness. It must be a mediator that can effectuate an infinite sacrifice for sin because sin is transgressed against an infinite God, and yet this Mediator must offer up a *human nature* as an infinite sacrifice since sins committed were committed by humans. The Mediator must be both God and man to accomplish this. Christ was made Mediator as a representative for all *His* posterity; as in Adam, so in Christ.

The *Covenant of Grace* is either instituted, or renewed. It was first *ratified* with Abraham, though echoed in Genesis 3:15 and made in the hearing of Adam and Eve. Genesis 3:15, "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; he shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise his heel." Then, Genesis 17:7–8, "And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you. "Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God." What does God promise here in the idea that God is the *God of Abraham,* and the *God of Abraham's descenda*nts in the same manner? It is a *federal* relation: the father represents the household which includes everyone right down to the children, and God communicates His blessings particularly to those that are elect, and by way externally in profession. Those who profess to be in the *Covenant of Grace* are of two sorts. There are those who comply with it internally and others who do so only externally, that is, in profession and visibility. But he that externally and visibly complies with the *Covenant of Grace*, *appears and professes* to do so really in the eyes of the church.

This institution is consecutively reestablished, and ultimately renewed completely in Christ. To Abraham and his descendants, God will be their God. These are particular words He uses over and over again in renewing that covenant as God progresses. To the Israelites God says in Exodus 29:45–46, “I will dwell among the children of Israel and will be their God.” And they shall know that I am the LORD their God, who brought them up out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them. I am the LORD their God.” To the Jews in captivity as stated in Jeremiah 24:7, “Then I will give them a heart to know Me, that I am the LORD; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God, for they shall return to Me with their whole heart.” This is even stated again after their captivity and release in Zechariah 13:9, “I will bring the one–third through the fire, will refine them as silver is refined, and test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, and I will answer them. I will say, ‘This is My people’; And each one will say, ‘The LORD is my God.’” Renewal is seen in Jeremiah 31:33, “But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.” 2 Corinthians 6:16 shows it is renewed in word, “As God has said: “I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people.” Hebrews 8:10 says, “For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.” Ultimately in celestial glory, at the end of the ages, Jeremiah 31:34 will be fulfilled where there will be no more teachers (no more pastors, theologians, church doctors *etc*.), and all will know God from the least to the greatest, “No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.” In heaven, there is no need of teachers and pastors. All will know the Lord at that time.

Christ fulfills the promise made to Abraham and his descendants forever. The *covenant* Jesus makes with the Father is seen throughout the entire Bible and especially vividly in parts of the New Testament. Mary was excited about Christ’s coming, why? Luke 1:55, “As he spoke to our

fathers, To Abraham and to his seed forever." It is the same language of the covenant. Even Zacharias said in Luke 1:72–73, "To perform the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant, The oath which He swore to our father Abraham." Even the apostle Peter says in Acts 2:39 with the same language of Genesis, "For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call." These are the Israelites who are dispersed who are going to be gathered in. Then in Acts 3:25, "You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'" And Paul, demonstrating the internal realities of the covenant in Galatians 3:16, "Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ." The Covenant made with Abraham is fulfilled *in Christ*, and the grace given internally is only in Christ. Paul says in Acts 26:6, "And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers." Paul knows that the promise made to Abraham is the promise of Jesus.

Consider the members of the *Covenant of Grace*. The Reformed Church has always held that in the *effectual* nature of the covenant, only the elect, are benefactors of God's gracious condescension in Christ. *The Westminster Larger Catechism*, Q31 says, "With whom was the *Covenant of Grace* made? A31: The *Covenant of Grace* was made with Christ as the second Adam, and in him with all the elect as his seed." This is the electing grace of God. God does not universally condescend to all men, for the condition of the covenant is *faith*, which is only attained by *grace*. The covenant itself, though, is regarded in two ways: either to internal essence (with the elect in Christ), or to as external aspect or blessings that attend the covenant in the visible church. The internal essence of the covenant answers to God's grace given to elect, though they are fallen human beings; the difference is that they are now *in Christ*. This pertains to the *invisible* church, in which the elect make up. That is, the elect are the beneficiaries of all the federal blessings that make up the *Covenant of Grace* in Christ. The external aspect refers to the external calling of the Gospel to all to repent, and those that make up the visible church. Thus many people who are part of the visible church, may be non–elect, and yet,

may “taste” of the heavenly gifts as Hebrews 6:10 teaches. *The Westminster Larger Catechism* in Q63 says, “What are the special privileges of the visible church? Answer: The visible church hath the privilege of being under God’s special care and government; of being protected and preserved in all ages, not withstanding the opposition of all enemies; and of enjoying the communion of saints, the ordinary means of salvation, and offers of grace by Christ to all the members of it in the ministry of the gospel, testifying, that whosoever believes in him shall be saved, and excluding none that will come unto him.” That is, the non–elect are the beneficiaries of all the federal curses that make up the *Covenant of Grace* with Christ as Judge. These are those that are *in* the church, but not *of* the church.

Let us look at God’s grace applied to us. The *Covenant of Grace* demonstrates to sinners that they ought to depend on God for salvation and not themselves. Genesis demonstrates that the covenant is enacted by God, through Christ, and has nothing to do with ourselves. The puritan John Ball (1585–1640) said, “The *Covenant of Grace* is that free and gracious Covenant which God of his mere mercy in Jesus Christ made with man a miserable and wretched sinner, promising unto him pardon of sin and eternal happiness, if he will return from his iniquity, embrace mercy reached forth, by faith unfeigned, and walk before God in sincere, faithful and willing obedience, as becomes such a creature lifted up unto such enjoyment, and partaker of such precious promises. This covenant is opposite to the former in kind, so that at one and the same time, man cannot be under the *Covenant of Works* and the *Covenant of Grace*. For he cannot hope to be justified by his perfect and exact obedience, that acknowledging himself to be a miserable and lost sinner, does expect pardon of the free mercy of God in Jesus Christ embraced by faith.”[10] God is infinitely wise in His condescension, for wicked men would never come to be redeemed if it were not for God’s grace. The fall of man did not take God by surprise as if He was caught off guard and now had to do something to redeem you and I. No, God has allowed man, in His plan of redemption, to so utterly sink into sin and misery, into a completely ruined state through the fall, that God used it as an occasion for the greater demonstration of His own glory through Jesus Christ. God took that which was evil, and turned it into an event for which He should be supremely

glorified by men. In this way it is now utterly apparent that man is completely and totally dependent on God for salvation. Biblically, we can say confidently, *men are not saviors in any way, shape or form.* There is nothing, in any way, that you as a sinner may accomplish, or barter toward with God that would advance your low estate and your condemned status. Dead men tell no tales, nor make any deals. Instead, the Scriptures repetitively demonstrate the lostness of men, and their inability to come to God for salvation. In fact, they are running with all their might in the opposite direction, seeking their own desires and their own intents, even attempting to invent new ways to sin against God. Wicked men not only do not want to come to Christ to give up their sin, but they are *dead set against it*. They would never do it, and do not desire to do it. Redemption is utterly meaningless to them, and they strive with their greatest effort, though vainly, to push God and His ways out of all their thoughts and out of their lives. Some have sinned from childhood for so long that their seared hearts, when any means of grace are brought before them or around them, that they become uncomfortable at its sight, and actually detest it in their heart. One often finds in old age homes old people who are hard hearted as hardened sinners. Many times you will find them hating everything, trusting no one, and having no desire to hear about the things of God. Yet, though God condescends to men, He will in no way pardon the guilty just because they are frail or old. Though God has bent low to bring fallen men to salvation, unless He changes them, they will never be saved. As Jonathan Edwards preached once, "God makes men sensible of their misery before he lavishes upon them his mercy and grace." Men must hear the bad news before they can ever understand the good news. If men are utterly caught in a ruined state, then God must come to the sinner, and change the sinner so that the condition of faith, which is required to be accepted in the beloved Son, will be met.

This saving change the Bible calls *regeneration*. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of *regeneration*, and renewing of the Holy Ghost," (Titus 3:5). From this change, as Christ taught Nicodemus in John 3, God enables the sinners to come to Him and believe on Him and receive all the benefits that the Son of God makes for him in the *Covenant of Grace*. God further glorifies Himself in this strange bending down to pick up the fallen sinner,

for man then realizes his need of Christ and need of God. He realizes that nothing he could have done would have raised one degree of acceptance with God, and, as a matter of fact, any attempt outside the grace of God would have further condemned him in attempting to save himself *without* God's grace. God has placed Christ in the forefront of the *Covenant of Grace*, for in Him is secured all the benefits that the elect receive. Isaiah 42:6 says, "I, the LORD, have called You in righteousness, And will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, As a light to the Gentiles." Jesus is given over to you by God's grace to bring you back to God. In saving faith, in the given condition that God graciously bestows to us in *the Covenant of Grace*, we see why we ought to have a real and sensible acknowledgment of absolute dependence on God in redemption. The phrase, "I did good today," has new meaning, a different meaning, God working in us to will and to do for *His* good pleasure as a result of Christ's work, as a result of the Holy Spirit's application of Christ's work, as a result of God's decree of the same. You are simply the *object* of God's work, and endowed with the rational ability to ponder such things. You should be ever discerning of God's work in and through you for his glorifying purposes. We should be sensible to the truth that God alone is to be exalted for all His work in, on and through us, and we should ascribe to Him all the glory of redemption. What do you do to demonstrate your acknowledgement that God has condescended in the *Covenant of Grace* by the death of His Son for you? God has given His people two distinct contexts in which to acknowledge their utter dependence on Him in matters of salvation: The context of private worship in both the family and individually, and the context of corporate worship. Worship is demonstrating worthiness to God.

If the *Covenant of Grace* is the means by which God saves sinners through Jesus Christ, then it is vitally important to come to know this manner of salvation, and be *thorough* in your knowledge of it. It is not enough for you and I simply to give God a nod and say *thank you* and walk on our way. God desires that His people are thoroughly acquainted with His way of salvation, even to teach and admonish these things among their children. Genesis 18:19 states, "For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, that the LORD may

bring to Abraham what he has spoken to him." Not only is Abraham to know the *Covenant of Grace*, but he is to know the ways of God's work that he walks righteously and justly, and teaches his children to do so. To know God's manner of salvation is glorifying to him, and to His Son who died for His people.

The *Covenant of Grace* or *covenant of life*, opens heaven to us now. Since we are redeemed, we see life differently than the wicked. Life to us surrounds the glorification of God in His work on our behalf. It is our whole life, or *should be* our whole life. Heaven, in this way, is now opened up to us showing that God lavishes on us His mercy, pity and grace to which we were once blinded. It is one thing to have God in our thoughts and hate him as wicked sinners, but *another thing* completely different to think about the things of God, the means of grace, and the benefits of God in a *savoring light*. In all our vocations, disposition, events, and actions, we view this life as a portal and doorway to the life to come. That should color the way we think, talk, walk, carry ourselves, sit in company with people, go out for entertainment (and the kind of entertainment we will partake of), how we spend our free time, what we will buy or not buy, how we will treat our children or our spouse or our friends, etc., as a matter of fact, it colors *everything*. The *Covenant of Grace* opens union with Christ and an eternal heaven to us, and God bids us to live *now* as if we were in heaven. That has profound implications on every action and event that happens in our life. The grace of God presses us to consider how dependent we are on God for salvation, for knowledge of Him and for our actions in everyday life. Now, what makes you different? What do you see in yourself that is different as a result of being a recipient of grace, if in fact you have been changed by this Covenantal God?

CHAPTER 7:
GOD, THE TRINITY

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," (Gen. 1:1).

When we think about the concept of *God*, who He is and what He has done, we ponder not only His attributes, but also His makeup or *personhood*. We turn our attention in Genesis to the *Triune God*. Can we find the Trinity in the Old Testament? Though we see shadows of God as *trinity* in the Old Testament, yet the doctrine is *more clearly* portrayed in the New Testament. But, it is important to make note that the doctrine of the trinity has its foundation in the Old Testament witness. It is not hard to find the triune God there.

God has certain attributes that describe His being and essence. Wrong views of God's being and essence will corrupt the worship of God. When Christians look at Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," the rest of the Bible is used to explain what that verses *means*. It is essentially a cryptic sentence until it is filled and packed with biblical *content* that makes sense to the proposition itself. "In the beginning God…" can be said by the Arian, the Jehovah Witness, the Mormon, the Roman Catholic, the New Ager, the Roman, the Hindu, *etc*. but they do not all mean the same thing as *the biblical Christian*. Genesis itself not only provides the reader with information about God in His attributes, but also gives hints about God's *person and essence*. The doctrine of the Trinity, overall, in both the Old Testament and the New Testament lies in pieces. It is set there in fragments that must be pieced together, *i.e. studied,* that when such a study is done it is not that the doctrine *becomes* Scriptural, but simply *more clear to us* in *studying Scripture*. When we put this together, we are not coming up with a new doctrine or idea, but we rest in what the Scriptures teach comprehensively about the God of Genesis 1:1. That is why words always give way to *content*, and words must be packed with *meaning*. *Trinity*, as you know, is not a *biblical* term,[11] but a *theologically packed term. The 1647 Westminster Confession* says, "There is but one only ,the living and true

God, in three persons in the Godhead; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory." There are no Scriptures in the Bible that come comparatively close to that definition. Rather, study is taken through the Bible (systematically) to pack the term "Trinity" with that information that the Bible teaches in fragments. Sometimes we must pick at the mind of God to know what He wants us to know in His word. That means studying the word of God is paramount to being a bible believing Christian. Genesis itself demonstrates much of who God is in essence and person. It demonstrates His *plurality* and His *singleness*.

First, let's consider the *threeness* of God's actions in creation. The essence of God can be hinted at in the actions of God in what He created. The Bible says that *God created*. The Hebrew *Elohiym* is plural and is joined to the singular verb to mean "He" created. *God*, plural, *He*, singular, created. Right from the very beginning we should be amazed at the language used. God created two heavens and one earth. He created the dual heavens (*shamyiym*), where the angels reside, where the birds reside, and the one earth (*'arets*). This is a tri–universe, or a three in one universe as God created it. How did *God* (plural), *He* (singular) create it? He created it in groups of *threes*. On day one God creates light, while on day four He creates the sun, moon and stars. On day two He separates the waters, making the clouds and seas and formed the sky, while on day five He creates birds and fish to inhabit those places. On day three He forms the dry ground, and on day six He creates the animals and humans to live there. The very act and manner, *God* (plural) *He* (singular) creates by three ways – God ordered creation a specific way, in a threefold manner. First, He speaks by *direct Fiat*. A fiat is a command or act of will that creates something without further effort. He speaks, and it is so. Secondly, He works by *separation*. He separates day from night, land from sea, and the like. Thirdly, He commands *production*. He commands the earth to produce everything (verses 11–12). He commands the lights of the sky to govern. He commands animals to bring forth more animals (verse 24). He sets man in the garden in a threefold union; husband, wife and children. He created the *universe* in a threefold distinction; with the past, present and future work in it. He created it *dimensionally* in a threefold pattern with

length, breadth and width. God, who created the universe, does not work in a monolithic manner; rather, His order is varied.

We have *God* (plural) He (singular) created the tri–universe. He who creates the heavens and the earth (verse 1), does so by the Spirit of God who hovers over the face of the waters and molds the earth (verse 2). The Spirit gives life to Adam (Genesis 2:7). The Spirit interprets dreams (41:38). And the speech or Word or Logos of God issues these divine fiats (which we will more clearly see later).

There is a deliberation *within* God in creation. Genesis 1:26–27 says, "Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in his own image; in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." There is this deliberation again in Genesis 3:22, "Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever." And again in Genesis 11:7, "Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." Not only do the Scriptures show groups of *three* in the tri–universe, but there is also deliberation between more than one *person*, but not more than one *God*.

Theophany, visible manifestations of God in the Old Testament, occurred many times in *tri–form.* God manifests Himself in various ways (*not various modes*). He visibly shows up on earth in a number of ways. In Genesis 16:7–13 it says,

> "Now the Angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur. And he said, "Hagar, Sarai's maid, where have you come from, and where are you going?" She said, "I am fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarai." The Angel of the LORD said to her, "Return to your mistress, and submit

> yourself under her hand." Then the Angel of the LORD said to her, "I will multiply your descendants exceedingly, so that they shall not be counted for multitude." And the Angel of the LORD said to her: "Behold, you are with child, and you shall bear a son. You shall call his name Ishmael, because the LORD has heard your affliction. He shall be a wild man; his hand shall be against every man, and every man's hand against him. And he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren." Then she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, You–Are–the–God–Who–Sees; for she said, "Have I also here seen him who sees me?""

The angel speaks to Hagar. God informs her of Ishmael and the name to be given. Hagar replies that God "sees." In Genesis 21:17–18, "And God heard the voice of the lad. Then the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said to her, "What ails you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is. "Arise, lift up the lad and hold him with your hand, for I will make him a great nation." The *angel* speaks as with the voice of God. The angel is the same *as* God and speaks *for* God. Genesis 22:11–12 says, "But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" So he said, "Here I am." And he said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me." The Angel of the Lord calls from heaven making promises in line with the covenant that God already established with Abraham, and says "I know…" The Angel makes God and Himself *equal*. In Genesis 31:10–13 we find, "And it happened, at the time when the flocks conceived, that I lifted my eyes and saw in a dream, and behold, the rams which leaped upon the flocks were streaked, speckled, and gray–spotted. "Then the Angel of God spoke to me in a dream, saying, 'Jacob.' And I said, 'Here I am.' "And he said, 'Lift your eyes now and see, all the rams which leap on the flocks are streaked, speckled, and gray–spotted; for I have seen all that Laban is doing to you. 'I am the God of Bethel, where

you anointed the pillar and where you made a vow to Me. Now arise, get out of this land, and return to the land of your family.'" The Angle tells Jacob things that are identified with God alone. Then in Genesis 18–19 three men appear to Abraham, and it says the *Lord* appeared (18:1) yet in the form of *three men*. Genesis 18:10, "And he said, "I will certainly return to you according to the time of life, and behold, Sarah your wife shall have a son." (Sarah was listening in the tent door which was behind him.)" This one God presents Himself in such a way as to pose questions as to how He interacts with men in *various* forms.

The formula of God's elect servants is demonstrated in tri–form. God is the *God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*. Genesis 50:24, "And Joseph said to his brethren, "I am dying; but God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land to the land of which he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob."" Genesis tells us that God creates, as well as seeing the Spirit molding the earth, and the Word of God speaking. He makes a tri–universe of two heavens and one earth. He makes that universe with length and breadth and height. He shows Himself to be the God of the *trifecta* of Old Testament formulas of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. And we find the Hebrew wording of *God* (plural) linked to being *He* (singular). There is no doubts that the Old Testament hints of this multifaceted person of God in that demonstrates Himself as *triune*.

In a onetime caveat in this book, let's establish *one God in three persons* past the simplicity of just looking at primeval history in Genesis. Let us for a moment consider the subsequent biblical revelation. There is one God. Scripture proves that God is one. Deut. 6:4 says, "Hear O Israel the Lord our God the Lord is One." Isa. 45:5–6, "I am the Lord, and there is no other; there is no God besides Me...That there is none besides Me. I am the Lord and there is no other; I form the light and create darkness, I make peace and create calamity, I the Lord, do all these things." 1 Cor. 8:4, "Therefore...we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no God but one." Ephesians 4:6, "...one Lord, one faith, one Baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

Scripture shows God as plural, specifically, Three in one. Scripture proves Three in One. In Rom. 8, we find Jesus Christ who dies

for sin, the Spirit of life, which gives us life, and God the Father who sends His Son and sends the Spirit. In Ephesians 1:3–14[12] we find God the Father blessing us with the spiritual blessing of Christ's work, done according to the good pleasure of His will before the world was even created, and then sealing the work of Christ's death with the sealing of the Holy Spirit of promise. We find the plurality of three in 2 Thess. 2:1–14, "...God, from the beginning chose you for salvation through the sanctification of the Spirit and belief in the truth to which he called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." We see clearly the plurality of three in the great commission given to the disciples by Christ in Matt. 28:19, "...baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit." And we see in Mark 1:9–11, the Father's voice, Jesus himself and the Spirit's descending. This baptism of Christ is echoed in Matthew 3:16–17, "When he had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

We see the plurality of three from the *three fold repetition* of blessing in Numbers 6:24–26, "The LORD bless you and keep you; The LORD make his face shine upon you, And be gracious to you; The LORD lift up his countenance upon you, And give you peace." We see the repetition of three in the threefold *holy* repetition of Isaiah 6:3, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God almighty…" But this threefold repetition is also designated in a threefold manner by the Father, Son and Spirit throughout Scripture.

First consider the Father. The name "Father" is applied in Scripture to the triune God, as the creator of all things. 1 Corinthians 8:6 says, "yet for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for him." Also consider Hebrews 12:9, "Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live?" And also James 1:17, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning." God is seen as the Father of Israel in Deuteronomy

32:6, “Do you thus deal with the LORD, O foolish and unwise people? Is he not your Father, who bought you? Has he not made you and established you?” And also in Isaiah 63:16, “Doubtless You are our Father…” God is the Father of believers in Matthew 5:45, “that you may be sons of your Father in heaven…” And in Matthew 6:6, “But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.” Also, see this in Romans 8:15, “For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.”

In a deeper sense, however, the idea of *Father* is applied to the First Person of the Trinity, to express His relation to the Second Person. John 1:14 says, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” In John 8:54 Jesus speaks of His Father, “Jesus answered, “If I honor Myself, My honor is nothing. It is My Father who honors Me, of whom you say that he is your God.” Also in John 14:12–13, “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. “And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.” This is the original Fatherhood, of which all earthly fatherhood is but a faint reflection. The distinctive characteristic of the Father is that He generates the Son from all eternity. The works particularly ascribed to Him are those of planning the work of redemption, creation and providence, and representing the Trinity in the *Covenant of Redemption*.

The Son is the second person in the Trinity who is also called the Word, the “Son” or “‘Son of God.” John 8:58–59 says, “Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.” Then they took up stones to throw at him; but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.” Christ bears this name as the only begotten of the Father in John 1:18, “No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has declared him.” And also in John 3:16, “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son…” And in John 3:18, “because

he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." He is called the "Son" in Galatians 4:4, "But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law…"

Christ is seen as the Messiah chosen of God as shown in Matthew 8:29, "And suddenly they cried out, saying, "What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?" Even the demons believed that Christ was God, the Messiah sent to fulfill the Father's covenant. Jesus attests to this Himself in Matthew 26:63–64, "But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to him, "I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!" Jesus said to him, "It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven." Others attested of this about Him in John 1:49, "Nathanael answered and said to him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" And also in John 11:27, "She said to him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world." He is seen as the Messiah in virtue of His special birth through the operation of the Holy Spirit as described in Luke 1:31–32, "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call his name JESUS. "He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David."" And also in Luke 1:35, "And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.""

Christ's special characteristic as the Second Person of the Trinity is that He is eternally begotten of the Father. Psalm 2:7 says, "I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You." Acts 13:33 echoes this, "God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that he has raised up Jesus. As it is also written in the second Psalm: 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.'" And so Hebrews 1:5 does the same, "For to which of the angels did he ever say: "You are My Son, Today I have begotten You"? And again: "I will be to him a Father, And he shall be to Me a Son"?"

The works more particularly ascribed to Christ as the second person of the Godhead are works of covenant fulfillment and mediation in being sent. He mediated the work of creation as stated in John 1:3, “All things were made through him, and without him nothing was made that was made.” Also, this is described in John 1:10, “he was in the world, and the world was made through him, and the world did not know him.” And also in Hebrews 1:2, “through whom also he made the worlds.”

Christ mediates the work of redemption as recorded in Ephesians 1:3–5, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will…”

The third person of the Trinity is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God as John 14:16–17 says, “And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Helper, that he may abide with you forever, “the Spirit of truth…” John 14:26 confirms this as well, “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.” He is termed the *Helper* in John 15:26, “But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, he will testify of Me.” His designation is to confirm the work and person of Christ, and teach believers the truth as in John 16:14, “He will glorify Me, for he will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.” The Spirit has the attributes of God such as omniscience as in Romans 8:27, “Now he who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because he makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.” And also in Acts 5:3–4, “But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? “While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.”“

The Spirit has intelligence (John 14:26), feelings (accommodated to our understanding) as in Ephesians 4:30, “And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.” He also has a will as in Acts 16:7, “After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them.” And in 1 Corinthians 12:11, “But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as he wills.” Scripture represents Him as speaking, searching, testifying, commanding, revealing, striving, and making intercession. Moreover, He is clearly distinguished from His own power. In Luke 1:35 He is distinguished from what He will do, “And the angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.” He is not simply a power. But He does have all power to which He determines how that power will be used. With Christ His power is used indiscriminately as in Luke 4:14, “Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of him went out through all the surrounding region.” Also this is seen in Acts 10:38, “how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.” Paul confirms this in his own ministry in 1 Corinthians 2:4, “And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power…”

The special characteristic of the Spirit is that He *proceeds* from the Father and the Son by *spiration*. This is a fancy theological word which means He comes or is sent *from* the Father and the Son as in John 15:26, “But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, he will testify of Me.” He is sent by Christ, or comes from Christ as in John 16:7, “Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send him to you.” He is closely linked to Christ and salvation as in Romans 8:9, “Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not his.” And He is closely linked to the Father as in Galatians 4:6, “And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father!”

In general it may be said that it is the Spirit's task to bring things to completion both in creation and redemption as in Genesis 1:2–3, "And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. Then God said, ""Let there be light"; and there was light." He is deemed as the Creator and the one who forms the universe as in Job 26:13, "By his Spirit he adorned the heavens…" He forms Christ in Mary, Luke 1:35, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you…" He is associated with the powerful word of God as in John 3:34, "For he whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure." Spiritual gifts in the church come from Him, as in 1 Corinthians 12:4, "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit." And also in Ephesians 2:22, "…in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit."

Knowing that God is triune, as Father, Son and Spirit, what are the Trinity's implications for Christian living? Make note that first, eternal life and covenantal union are placed in the knowledge of the Trinity. In other words, salvation surrounds knowing the true God who is Father, Son and Spirit. *You cannot be saved without knowledge of the trinity as trinity*. John 17:3 says, "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, and that Your Son may glorify You, as You have given him authority over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as You have given him. And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent." Jesus equates salvation in Himself *with* knowledge or belief of the Father as in John 14:1, 9, "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in Me...he who has seen Me has seen the Father." We *must* know the Father *and* Jesus Christ whom He has sent.

God has revealed Himself in salvation as *Trinitarian* as in Romans 8:32, "He who did not spare his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" God gave His Son for us. The Son came and died for us. The Spirit applies redemption to us.

Worship should be *Trinitarian* both in church and at home. What is the difference between worshipping God and the Triune God? Generally, *nothing*. Christian worship *is* Trinitarian. When you worship God you

worship Christ. When you worship God you worship the Spirit. When you worship God you worship the Father. Without worship being Trinitarian, worship becomes twisted and warped. Just the very act of prayer is Trinitarian; or it *should* be consciously understood that way. *The Westminster Larger Catechism* Question 178 says, "Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God, in the name of Christ, by the help of his Spirit; with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies." Jesus taught us to pray to the Father, through the Son, by the power of the Spirit. He told us that we pray to, "Our Father." Not "My Father." Worship and devotion are collectively made by the covenant community to the three persons of the Godhead.

Communion of any kind with God ought to be *Trinitarian*. We are *communing* with the Father as in 1 John 2:15, "If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." Also, the Apostle Peter says in 1 Peter 1:17, "And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear." Also, this is stated in Ephesians 5:20, "giving thanks always for all things to God the Father". Then we are communing *at the same time* with the Son as in John 6:29, "Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he sent." We are to love the Son as in Ephesians 6:24, "Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen." And we call upon Christ for our strength and help as in Acts 7:59, "And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." We *also* commune with God (or walk with Him) at the same time as with the Spirit as in Romans 8:2, "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death." The Spirit integrally works with us in truth as in Hebrews 10:15, "But the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us…" And the Spirit rests on us as in 1 Peter 4:14, "blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you." The applicatory point here is that we should have a profound sense of communion with every member of the Trinity, and not simply always as "God." Father, Son and Holy Spirit press us to distinguish their works, and realize their condescension to us in what they have done to redeem men. *Communion* means, "intimate fellowship." *Intimate* means to communicate directly. *Fellowship* means companionship. Combine all these together and you can call God *friend*.

Abraham was called a friend of God. “And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God,” (James 2:23). And so when we look to God in our communion with Him we find the Triune God as in 2 Corinthians 13:14, “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.”

Regardless of whether we look at Genesis, or we look at the rest of Scripture, we find the doctrine that God is triune. *God*, (plural), *He*, (singular), created the tri–universe, (the two heavens and one earth, in their length, breadth and depth), for His glory, and for the good of men. Even from the first verse in the Bible we find this plural Godhead engaging us to discern His character from the very beginnings of primeval history.

CHAPTER 8:
THE ESTABLISHMENT OF COVENANT LAW IN GENESIS

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," (Gen. 1:1).

The first verse of Genesis chapter 1 has given us *seven chapters* to consider the main basis of the person and work of God seen in the Father, Son and Spirit. Based on this verse we see that God's creative action in creating the tri–universe (the two heavens and the earth) gives way to His desire and will within the sphere of His creation among His covenant people. And in God's relationship with man we find Him delivering conformity to His character by way of covenant stipulations and laws. What is the Law? *The 1647 Westminster Confession of Faith* in section 19:5 says, "The moral law does forever bind all, as well justified persons as others, to the obedience thereof; and that, not only in regard of the matter contained in it, but also in respect of the authority of God the Creator, who gave it. Neither doth Christ, in the gospel, any way dissolve, but much strengthen this obligation." The duty which God requires of man, is obedience to His revealed will. The moral law is the declaration of the will of God to mankind, directing and binding everyone to personal, perfect, and perpetual conformity and obedience to it, in the frame and disposition of the whole man, soul and body, and in performance of all those duties of holiness and righteousness which he owes to God and man. God promises life on its fulfillment, and threatens death on its breach. The will of God in this way is an extension of His character. When one deals with the law, they are dealing with what God requires of them, *to be like God*. The law is a reflection, a faint reflection for us, of God's character. A law is that which directs, prescribes or controls. Christ does not later dispel the law, but rather strengthens the obligation to it, as we will see. So in every age we find God's declaration of His will to His people, men are to conform to that law, otherwise men become *law…less* or as we would say with Scripture *lawless*.

The *law* in general and the beginnings of the covenant relationship are found in the Garden of Eden in Genesis. Everything in Genesis moves toward the glorification of God in the establishment of the covenant blessings as a restoration of the creation blessing that Adam first experienced, though not completely.[13] God's covenant stipulations before and after the fall ultimately were formulated into the legal code of Israel as a rule of obedience, as it is in the code of life for every Christian who loves Christ. After the fall, because men fell and Adam disobeyed God's law, the use of the law moves to the covenant restoration of the blessings Adam could have had if he had not disobeyed. Oftentimes people think that God came up with laws *in* Exodus and Numbers and Leviticus so that the Children of Israel would have something to follow that was *new*. But these laws were already scattered through Genesis in their early form and republished under the *Covenant of Grace* at the time God formally gave the law in the *Covenant of Grace* with Moses. But they were not *new*. Nor were they a republication of the *covenant of works* alone, as if God required His people to move backwards to personal holiness on their own ability, rather than by the means of grace under the power of His Spirit. These laws were simply more formulated and expanded in later biblical books. The Law in general is the means by which God would bring blessing through the obedience of His covenant people, and that obedience required certain standards for discerning good and evil. They had to know what God's will was, otherwise they would never know what good and evil were. Adam would have never known not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil if God did not *tell* him.

The Law in general in Genesis is extremely important. Let's consider a few of them. God gave commandments to the parents in the garden (2:16–17) and judged them on the basis of their compliance (3:8–24). Genesis 2:16–17 says, "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; "but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." *Not* obeying it would have been evil, and they were required to be good. Genesis 3:8–13 says, "And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. Then the LORD God called to Adam and

said to him, “Where are you?” So he said, “I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.” And He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?” Then the man said, “The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate.” And the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.” The *blame game* began at this point. Up to this point God gave them commandments and then judged them eternally based on the success or failure of this act. Abraham reversed the disobedience of our first parents by obeying all the commandments and statutes from God by God’s power in grace. Genesis 26:4–5 says, “And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; “because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.”“ So Abraham was in compliance with God’s will, and as we will see, this compliance is available through Jesus Christ.

Throughout the book of Genesis individuals served God by obeying His commandments. The general designation for this obedience is, “walked with God,” (5:22; 6:9; 17:1). Genesis 5:22 says, “After he begot Methuselah, Enoch walked with God three hundred years, and had sons and daughters.” Genesis 6:9, “Noah walked with God.” Genesis 17:1, “The LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless.” Adam even walked with God in the cool of day. Walking with God was compliance with God’s will.

Disobedience to God’s righteous will—that is, doing evil—brought the curse of death as stated in Genesis 2:17, “But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” It brought the flood as in Genesis 6:3, “And the LORD said, “My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.” It brought plagues as in Genesis 12:17, “But the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram’s wife.” It brought judgment on the nations as in Genesis 15:14, “And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great

possessions." It brought judgment on sinners as in Genesis 38:7, "But Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD killed him." It brought the warning of death for adultery as in Genesis 20:7, "Now therefore, restore the man's wife; for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you shall live. But if you do not restore her, know that you shall surely die, you and all who are yours." It brought a reckoning for guilt as in Genesis 42:22, "And Reuben answered them, saying, "Did I not speak to you, saying, 'Do not sin against the boy'; and you would not listen? Therefore behold, his blood is now required of us."

There is also the consideration of God enacting what I will call *the cultic law*, and later formally by Moses into the *cultus* of Israel. The people of God find that approval from God in the sinful world requires *cultic* acts.[14] Genesis shows many of these, which the law later incorporated formally. We will only consider a few. The Sabbath day was founded in creation as in Genesis 2:1–3, "Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made." Seasons were ordered for service and worship as in Genesis 1:14, "Then God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years." Sacrificial worship was at the center of the believer's gratitude. God clothed Adam and Eve with animal skins (3:21) as we have already discussed. Cain and Abel brought their offerings in Genesis 4:3, "And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD." Noah sacrificed a sweet savor offering (8:20–22). The people were never to eat the blood as in Genesis 9:4, "But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood." The patriarchs built many altars to attest to God's presence and promise[15] as in Genesis 12:7, "Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." And there he built an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him."" And also Genesis 26:25, "So he built an altar there and called on the name of the LORD, and he pitched his tent there; and there Isaac's servants dug a well." Substitution with animal sacrifice was taught, and later this would become the temple

mount. Genesis 22:2, “Then He said, “Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.”“ And also Genesis 22:12–13, “And He said, “Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.” Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son.” The covenant was initiated by sacrifice and oath as in Genesis 15:9, “So He said to him, “Bring Me a three–year–old heifer, a three–year–old female goat, a three–year–old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.”“ Treaties and boundaries were established by sacrifice as in Genesis 31:54, “Then Jacob offered a sacrifice on the mountain, and called his brethren to eat bread. And they ate bread and stayed all night on the mountain.” Oil was poured out on the altar as in Genesis 28:18, “Then Jacob rose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put at his head, set it up as a pillar, and poured oil on top of it.” Places of worship became important throughout the book. Beer Lahai Roi (chapter 24), Bethel (chapter 28), false places (*e.g.*, the *ziggurat* of Babel) were ruined (chapter 11). A priestly blessing was deemed an oracle from God as in Genesis 14:18–20, “Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. And he blessed him and said: “Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand.” And he gave him a tithe of all.” Tithing was the natural response of the faithful as in Genesis 14:20, “And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand.” And he gave him a tithe of all.” Circumcision was a sacred rite (17:10–14; 21:4) and not to be profaned as in Genesis 34:14, “And they said to them, “We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one who is uncircumcised, for that would be a reproach to us.” Intercession (18:16–33) served to bring about conformity to righteousness as when Abraham barters with God about the people of Sodom. Solemn oaths were a part of the cultic life (14:22; 21:22–23; 24:2–3; 25:33; 26:28; 31:43–54; 47:29; 50:25). Genesis 50:25 shows Joseph’s oath, “Then Joseph took an oath from the children of Israel, saying, “God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here.”“ Prayer brought deliverance (20; 24:12–15; 25:21; 32:11), as

in Genesis 32:11, “Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, lest he come and attack me and the mother with the children.” Proclamation of God’s name in worship at the altar began (4:26; 12:8; 13:4; 21:33; 26:25), as seen by Abraham in Genesis 21:33, “Then Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba, and there called on the name of the LORD, the Everlasting God.” Religious vows were to be kept as in Genesis 28:20–21, “Then Jacob made a vow, saying, “If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I am going, and give me bread to eat and clothing to put on, “so that I come back to my father’s house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God.” There were certain dietary laws enacted. The sinew of the hip was not eaten (32:32), [16] and there was a distinction between the clean and the unclean animals (7:2, 8). The sin of intoxication was also deplored (9:20–25). Uncleanness was to be shunned,[17] things like household idols were to be removed (35:2); homosexuality forbidden (19:7); incest rebuked (19:37–38); uncovering the nakedness of the father brought loss of inheritance (35:22 and 49:3–4); marriage with Canaanites prohibited (24; 28; 38); separation from pagan nations required (13:13; 19:37–38; 31:43–55; 34:23; 21:22–34); avoidance of pagan superstitions advised (30:14); idols buried (35:2); and the whore burned as in Genesis 38:24, “And it came to pass, about three months after, that Judah was told, saying, “Tamar your daughter–in–law has played the harlot; furthermore she is with child by harlotry.” So Judah said, “Bring her out and let her be burned!”“ Even before the law was given formally these aspects were a normal part of the believer’s life. They demonstrate a conformity to holiness before God.

The Decalogue itself, are found in the events of Genesis. All Ten Commandments are found there. God was recognized as sovereign over all things that the pagans worshiped (chapter 1), and so would tolerate no false idols as in Genesis 35:1–5, “Then God said to Jacob, “Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there; and make an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you fled from the face of Esau your brother.” And Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, “Put away the foreign gods that are among you, purify yourselves, and change your garments. “Then let us arise and go up to Bethel; and I will make an altar there to God, who answered me in the day of my distress and has been with me in the way which I have gone.” So they gave Jacob all the foreign gods which were in

their hands, and the earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the terebinth tree which was by Shechem. And they journeyed, and the terror of God was upon the cities that were all around them, and they did not pursue the sons of Jacob." They put away those false gods because there is only one God.

Humankind was made in the image of God, and so it would be futile to make images (1:26). Genesis 1:26, "Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." The image of God is placed in men, not in things.

God's name is attached to His word. Abraham called on the *name* of the Lord many times through the narratives and here we see that non–conformity to God's word is likened to bringing reproach on His name. This would be taking God's name in vain.

The Sabbath day commemorated the creation (2:1–3) and therefore served as a sign of the new creation. Genesis 2:1–3 says, "Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made." So just in these few considerations so far, the first four commandments are seen. Are the latter six commands also mentioned? Yes they are.

People were to honor their fathers and mothers rather than live in moral abandonment (9:24–29; 35:22). Genesis 35:22 says, "And it happened, when Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine; and Israel heard about it."

Killing was evil (4:8, 11, 23; 9:6; 27:41; 34:25–30; 37:18), for it destroys God's creation and image in man. Genesis 4:8, "Now Cain talked

with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him."

Committing adultery was prohibited (26:11; 39:7–9 (with Joseph's running from Potiphar's wife); 12:19 and 20:3–7 (Abimelech touching Sarai)—under the penalty of death. Genesis 12:19 says, ""Why did you say, 'She is my sister'? I might have taken her as my wife. Now therefore, here is your wife; take her and go your way."" Stealing was wrong (14:1–12; 31:19; 40:15). Initially the idea of stealing meant *kidnapping*. Genesis 14:12 says, "They also took Lot, Abram's brother's son who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed." And also Genesis 40:15, "For indeed I was stolen away from the land of the Hebrews; and also I have done nothing here that they should put me into the dungeon."

Bearing false witness or swearing falsely was prohibited. You could combine here the ninth commandment and the taking of the name of God in vain at the same time, (21:22–23; 37:32; 39:14), for false accusation, or false testimony, because it was deceptive and destructive.

Lying is wrong (12:13; 20:2; 26:7; and many other examples of troubling deceptions). Genesis 12:13 shows us what happens when Abram lied, "Please say you are my sister, that it may be well with me for your sake, and that I may live because of you."

Coveting was wrong as in Genesis 3:6–7, showing that such strong desire prompted other sins. Genesis 3:6–8, "So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings. And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden."

The many situational laws[18] in Exodus 21–23 and the rest of the Pentateuch find their basis *in Genesis*. For example, we find the foundation for marriage (1:18–24); the problem with two or more wives

(4:19; 6:1–4 for harems; 29:28 for sisters); intermarriage and violation of marriage rights by rape (34). We find Levite customs for carrying on the name of the deceased (38). There are inheritance laws and possession of property, and not taking another's goods (14:23); there are economical examples of the purchase of the cave by Abraham (23); the selection of the true heir and the dismissal of others (25:1–6); being cheated out of the proper inheritance (31:14); how wages should be given (31:7,41); the right of transfer (25:31) even if done abominably as in Genesis 25:31, "But Jacob said, "Sell me your birthright as of this day."" We find the necessity of love for others when we see the situation of a hated brother (27:41; 37), a sisters' tension (29–30), the fear of retaliation (50:15), and various quarrels (13; 45:24). We also see the treatment of servants and slaves such as a handmaid (16; 21), the submission to masters (16:6, 9) and the treatment of strangers (18:1–8). All of this is found in Genesis and creates the foundational laws that will later be expounded and set in place by God throughout the ages.

What has the Bible taught about the basic aspect of the Law? The Hebrew word commonly rendered *Law,* occurs more than two hundred times in the Old Testament. It primarily signifies *instruction* rather than *precept*. The Greek word occurs almost two hundred times in the New Testament. It means anything allotted or apportioned, then is used as a usage or prescription, then finally used as a law. In the Psalms it used of the entirety of the word of God as in Psalm 1:2, "But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night." It twice has the sense of a force governing our actions in our present sinful state as in Romans 7:23, "But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." There is the *law of nature* as in Romans 2:14, "For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves." There are requirements for the law as in Galatians 3:11, "But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for "the just shall live by faith."" The whole of the Mosaic dispensation is designated as the Law as in John 1:17, "For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ."

The general character of the Law of God is that it is unbending, and uncompliant. All *law* comes from God. The Law of God is *one*, not many. There is no conflict between any of the precepts of the Law. One Law does not contradict another. There is no difference as to its authority. James 2:10 says, “For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.” All God’s commandments hang *together*. The Law requires compliance with its demands as obedience to God. The Law comprehends all conceivable moral acts *at once*. Psalm 119:96 says, “But Your commandment is exceedingly broad.” It enjoins all duties, binding on all rational creatures. The Law is *spiritual* as John Calvin said, “The divine law given to our minds, is the proper regulation of the principal requisite to a righteous observance of it.” We must *righteously* observe it. Why? The Law is always right. It is an unerring standard of duty, being holy, just and good. The Law is of perpetual obligation as in Matthew 5:17, “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.” Not only does He say that He does not destroy it, but He says those who are lawless are those without the Law and those, He says, must *depart from Him.* The Law, like its Author, is supreme. Acts 5:29, “But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: “We ought to obey God rather than men.”“ The law itself is practicable. Adam kept it until he fell. His failure to obey it now is not changeable to the law itself, but to his sin. As a result of sin, that is the problem. Listen to Romans 7:10, “And the commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death.” What is Paul saying here? The commandment or law in and of itself would have brought life. But why is it associated with death now? It is due to the fall and that men are fallen. Fallen men, sinful men, cannot in that way keep the law *perfectly*. The law is a reflection of the character of God. Is that bad? No. But because we are fallen something else must take place for the law to be fulfilled.

The use of the law is that it is a rule of life. Psalm 119:5, “Oh, that my ways were directed To keep Your statutes!” Psalm 119:18, “Open my eyes, that I may see Wondrous things from Your law.” We see in the law the conviction of sin as in Romans 5:20, “Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound.” And also Romans 3:19, “Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.”

And further Galatians 3:24, “Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.” The puritan Thomas Watson said, “The law is a star to lead one to Christ.” As the Magi followed the star to Christ so we follow the Law to Christ.

Justification and sanctification by the Law alone is impossible. But that does not mean we do not strive to be holy. Yet, we cannot be justified by our works as in Galatians 2:16, “Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.” This is not the fault of the Law. Romans 7:16 says, “If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good.” Galatians 3:21 clarified this slightly when it says, “Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law.” What made it weak? Romans 8:3 tells us, “For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh.” For believers it is used in restraining their corruptions, because it forbids sin and denounces the most fearful curses against those who love and practice lawlessness. Christians are not under the Law to be justified, but they are under the Law to be *sanctified* in Christ. Jesus is clear in Luke 6:46, “But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do the things which I say?” Those who do not keep the Law, who are against the law, or say the Law is not for Christians today are called *Antinomian*. They are described in Matthew 7:23, “And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!” And the Apostle John comments in 1 John 3:4, “Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.” Antinomianism is unchristian. When you hear someone say that the Law is not for us today as New Testament Christians, you are listening to an *Antinomian* speak.

The Law demonstrates the righteousness of Christ’s work fulfilled for His people. The plan of salvation by grace in Christ Jesus is so arranged and ordered that obedience to the moral Law sincerely rendered with evangelical motives meets a divine reward. Romans 4:24–25 says, “It

shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification." Hebrews 12:28–29 states, "Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire." Can we use the law for good? Yes. 1 Timothy 1:8, "But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully."

Let us make an application of the Law to us *now*. Where a duty is commanded, the contrary sin is forbidden. Honoring your mother and father is the command, and not honoring your father and mother is sin. Not that God means what is not stated or said is acceptable. It's like the principle: be like God, not like anything God is not like. So that which is forbidden in the Law of God is never to be enacted. Your *personal obedience* is required as a Christian. Ezekiel 18:20 is very plain on this, "The soul who sins shall die." There is never an excuse to not be like God. Jeremiah Burroughs said, "It is better to suffer the greatest affliction, than to commit the least sin."[19] And Paul writes that for every temptation we have there is an escape. 1 Corinthians 10:13, "No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it."

That which God commands is always our duty. As we have opportunity to do our duty before God in every circumstance, we are to perform it. Tired, lazy, busy, are all excuses that turn obedience to disobedience. We should always be in a right state of mind and heart to do what is required as occasion offers. Hebrews 3:13 says, "But exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today,"" And Ephesians 5:15–16 explains our watchful eye, "See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil."

The aim of the Law is conformity to God's character, or His holiness. Leviticus 19:2 says, "Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say to them: 'You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy." He instructs them to be holy in Leviticus 20:7, "Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am the LORD your

God.” The Apostle Peter echoes this directive in 1 Peter 1:15–16, “But as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy.” Holiness of heart is conformity to the Law of God.

Love is the fulfilling of the Law. Our sanctification is *fulfilled* in many respects in the way we both love men and love God. Love to men is seen in Romans 13:10, “Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.” And in Galatians 5:14, “For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”“ And Paul explains that the purpose of all the commandments for believers is *love* in 1 Timothy 1:5, “Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith.” But we must join this first and foremost with love to God. Jesus is exceedingly clear in Matthew 22:37, “Jesus said to him, ‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’”

CHAPTER 9:
CREATION

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day. And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day. And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good. And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the third day. And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the fourth day. And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his

kind: and God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth. And the evening and the morning were the fifth day. And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good. And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so. And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made," (Gen. 1:1–2:3).

We have spent quite a few chapters considering many important introductory aspects and foundational points to the book of Genesis, and how it impacts the Christian. We move on to the next portion which is considerably larger and covers the basic idea of *creation*. First we want to look at God, through His Spirit, creating the entire universe out of the dark chaos (1:1–2). God *created* the universe (chapter 1). This seems rather straightforward. But think about this in terms of the reason Genesis was

written. It is primarily a *religious* book, not a scientific book, unless it speaks scientifically about certain aspects that God requires that we consider. In this way the first section of Genesis covering creation is a *narrative*, and part of church history. It contains *some* scientific aspects about creation. So this section could be deemed *religious*, with a *hint* of scientific importance.

We know that God is the sovereign Creator of all that exists. The circumstances were that the earth was chaotic and enveloped in darkness, but the Spirit of God was ensuring that creation would take place according to God's will (chapter 2). The wording of this first point reflects the interpretation that verse 1 is a summary statement and that verse 2 provides *circumstantial* clauses. In doing so, God *transforms* chaos into creation (1:1–2). The Hebrew verb used for create (*bara'*) is used in Scripture exclusively for the activity of God. Humans may *make* (*'dsd*), *form* (*ydsar*), or *build* (*band*); but for God, He *alone* creates. The verb does not in and of itself mean, *creation out of nothing*; it basically means to produce something *new, fresh, and perfect*. Also the verb refers to the activities of the six days to follow. There was nothing, and God brought life from nothing out of sheer power (*divine fiat*).

The first verse declares the message of the chapter in summary fashion: God created *everything*. What is so striking about this great theological truth is that God (*'elohim* – plural) is introduced simply as the One who existed before anything in the universe. Before anything was, *God existed*. But He decided to demonstrate His glory in creation. What God created is here called, "the heavens and the earth," signifying the *whole universe*. Other examples of this kind of poetic device are, "day and night" (meaning all the time) and, "man and beast" (meaning all created physical beings). *Heaven and earth* indicate not only the heaven and the earth but *everything* in creation. Genesis 2:4 also uses this expression in a restatement of the work of creation throughout the six days. All this activity is, "in the beginning," (*bere'sft*). "Beginning" refers the first phase of an order of things, which must be the beginning of the universe as it is known. Accordingly, John 1:1 precedes Genesis 1:1 in *logical* order – *in the beginning was the Word*. John explains it, but Moses in writing Genesis *assumes it*. The point of the verse, then, is that God is absolutely sovereign

over all matter. Such sovereignty demands allegiance, for to acknowledge the Creator in this way naturally leads to submission to Him. Everything with life and breath owes its existence to God, and in this way, owes its allegiance to Him.

When God created the universe, it was in chaos. The chaos necessitates the transformation into the creation (verse 2a). It is clear from the contents of verse 2 that something is drastically wrong at the outset. Two clauses set down the circumstances as chaotic: the first states that the earth was, "waste and void," (*tohu wdbohu*), ("formlessness and emptiness"). "Void" (*bohu*) is a relatively rare word occurring only two other times in Scripture, in both cases joined with *waste* (*tohu*) to describe a judgment of God (Jer. 4:23; Isa. 34:11).[20] In fact, the Jeremiah passage constructs an antithesis to this creation account, outlining a dismantling of creation by the judgment of God. "Waste and void," though, cannot describe an intermediate stage in God's work of creation. Isaiah 45:18 states that God did not make this world a waste (*tohu*), "For thus says the LORD, Who created the heavens, Who is God, Who formed the earth and made it, Who has established it, Who did not create it in vain, Who formed it to be inhabited: "I am the LORD, and there is no other." This key phrase in Genesis 1:2 indicates that the world *must be* shaped and inhabited before it may be pronounced *good*.

The narrative shows how God brought this world from its primitive condition of desolation and waste to its fullness and order. Not only was the earth, "waste and void," but, according to the second circumstantial clause, "darkness" (*hosek*) was upon the face of the deep. *Darkness* throughout the Bible represents evil and death—it is not conducive to life. Some uses of the motif of darkness include the plague of darkness on Egypt, (Exod. 10:15; Psalm 105:28), the wicked (1 Sam. 2:9), wicked enemies (Ps. 35:6), death (Job 3:4–5), the day of the Lord in judgment (Isa. 13:10), and a parallelism with the Hebrew idea of *calamity* (Isa. 45:7). Neither is darkness a positive good in Genesis; rather, it is *dispelled* by the first act of creation. This darkness covered the face of *tehom.* This term refers to the salty deep, the ocean, and by it figuratively to the *abyss*. In the first part of Genesis 1:2, there is in this way an ominous, uncomfortable tone. The clauses describe not the results of

divine creation but a chaos at the earliest stage of this world. Genesis does not tell the reader how the chaos came about. But it does tell the reader that the Spirit is going to make it good.

The Spirit of God ensures the act of creation (2b). In contrast to the first two clauses of verse 2, a third clause offers a positive thought, "the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters (*mayim*)." The material is now the life–giving water and not the chaotic, abyss–like deep. The activity belongs to the Spirit of God, not an awesome wind sweeping across the waters, as some have translated it. This verb (*rdhap*) basically means "flutter, or fly"; it is used in Deuteronomy 32:11 to describe an eagle stirring up the nest, fluttering over its young. In much the same way, the unformed, lifeless mass of the watery earth was under the care of the divine Spirit, who hovered over it, *ensuring* its forthcoming improvement.

Let's consider what the Spirit developed. In six days God, by His powerful Word, called into existence a perfect, harmonious, and fruitful creation to be enjoyed and ruled by human beings, (1:3–31). In three days God brought about order and form through His sovereign creative acts, (verses 3–13). The first three days remedy the formlessness.

In day 1 God created light and sovereignly divided it from the darkness, (verses 3–5). At the beginning of the account the reader learns that the *means* of creation was the Word of God. The first verb, "and he said," sets the tone for this emphasis throughout the chapter and the rest of the biblical revelation, (*cf*. Psa. 33:9; John 1:1–3; 1 Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:16). What God said in His creative decree makes the point more prominent, "Let there be ...and there was." The verbs used here (*yehi…wayhf)* are related to the holy name *Yahweh*, the great I Am. The use of these words suggests a significant word play. God, who in Exodus 3:14 is known as "I Am" (*'ehyeh* explains Yahweh), says, "Let there be" (*yehi*), "and there was" (*wayhi*). It is not surprising, then, that John records that Jesus Christ *is* the Word of God, who created *everything*, (John 1:3). In Genesis, Israel learned that the Word of the Lord is the powerful transforming word that was first manifested in creation. That which God calls into existence at the outset is light, immediately changing a world enveloped in darkness. It is natural light, or physical light, but it means much more than simply *light*.

The Bible shows again and again that light and darkness signify mutually exclusive realms, especially in spiritual matters of good and evil. Throughout Scripture light is the realm of God and the righteous; darkness is the domain of the Evil One and death. Light represents that which is holy, pure, true, life–giving, and joyful. For example, when God brought the judgment of darkness on Egypt, Israel enjoyed light in their dwellings, (Exod. 10:21–23). When Israel followed the Lord's light through the wilderness by night, they were assured of His presence. When they were instructed to keep the lamps burning in the Holy Place, they knew that there was something symbolic about that light. In the act of creating light in the darkened arena of the world, God in this way also manifested His nature and will. After the creation of light God announced His evaluation, and *it was good*. The idea of the word *good* (*tob*) is that the light is useful, fitting, and healthy. That which is good is conducive for and *enhances* life —so light is good, not the darkness. Since darkness yet remained, God then divided it from this light. From the beginning God's people would learn that God makes divisions (*bddal*). In Israel's law the Lord would make divisions between the holy and the profane (Lev. 10:10; 11:47), between the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place (Exod. 26:33), and in fact between Israel and the nations (Lev. 20:24, 26). After the light and the darkness attained their separate spheres, God named them "day" (*yom*) and "night" (*Idyld*). The work of creation is that in which God did in the beginning, by the word of His power, make of nothing the world, and all things in it, for Himself, within the space of six days, *and all very good*. The act of naming something in the ancient Near East was an act of sovereign dominion often associated with creation. Later God entrusted His dominion over the earth to Adam by letting *him* name all the living creatures.

In day 2 God created the sky and sovereignly separated the waters above and below it (verses 6–8). On the second day God created an expanse in the atmosphere to separate the waters above from the waters below. This "firmament" (from Latin *fir–mamentum*, something made solid), is poetically described elsewhere as a tent curtain (Psalm 104:2), a veil (Isa. 40:22), clear pavement like sapphire (Exod. 24:10), and molten glass (Job 37:18). This atmospheric expanse was a necessary progression in the development of creation. Up to this point the atmosphere may have

been like a dense fog; there may have been little visibility and very little light shining through. With the creation of the expanse God set a division between the cloud masses above and the waters below. The text reports that it happened as decreed, “and it was so.” The word “so” is much stronger than it may seem. It means that the light and darkness found their fixed place in the order of creation. The creation of the expanse dividing the waters is not called “good,” because the work of God with the water is *not yet* completed. The sovereignty of God appears in this day’s activity in naming the expanse, “heavens,” (*samayim*), and also in His control over this domain. God not only created this domain but also controlled it by making a *division* in it. The theological significance of this teaching involves Israel’s confidence in the Lord as the supreme God of the heavens and, Israel’s compliance with all the divisions and distinctions He made in His creation.

In day 3 God created the sea and dry land and sovereignly blessed the earth (verses 9–13). On the third day God caused the dry land to appear and the earth to flourish with growth. The emphasis now begins to shift from bringing *order* to bringing *fullness*. God continued His work of bringing order to creation by decreeing that fertile land appear through the gathering of the waters into reservoirs He called, “seas,” (*yammfm*). In this report we learn that God set the boundaries for the seas, demonstrating His sovereign control over them. On the emerging dry land God caused all manner of vegetation to appear. This vegetation (*dese’*) seems to be the main term, and herbage (‘*eseb*) and trees (‘*es*) seem to be subdivisions of it.[21] God gathered the seas together and decreed that the fertile earth produce vegetation.

In three more days God brought about fullness and harmony within the created universe through His sovereign creative acts (verses 14–31). In day 4 God created luminaries in the heavens to govern the temporal order, (14–19). The fourth day records how God created the lights of the sky (the sun, moon, and stars) to rule over the heavens. The language here describes the wonders; the sun is not in the atmosphere, it is far beyond it, but appears to be in the heavens. Their function is to dominate the day and the night, to serve as signs for the fixed seasons, and to rule over the heavens. Also, both earthly and heavenly bodies are all subject to the will

of the Creator. They are witnesses to the glory of God, (Psalm 19). To look to the sun or the stars should direct the true believer's thoughts to the Creator. But humans most often rejected the Creator and worshiped the creation, (Rom. 1).

In day 5 God created animal life for the sea and sky and sovereignly blessed them with fruitfulness (verses 20–23). On the fifth day God created all the living creatures that inhabit the seas and that fly across the skies. This passage declares that life came into being by the direct command of God. Vegetation is not included here. To the Hebrew, vegetation is not life (*i.e.*, not *nepes hayyd*). Although these verses are concerned with general categories of living things, the great sea creatures (*tanninim*) are singled out for special attention. Egyptians worshiped great sea creatures as dragons and monsters in rebellion against God, something that would be striking to the Israelites. God creates life for the land, but human life is for His service.

In day 6 God created animal life for the land and human life to rule over creation and sovereignly blessed them all with fruitfulness (verses 24–31). The sixth day reveals both the culmination and the goal of creation. After bringing order and fullness to the creation, God created human life to enjoy and rule the now habitable world. First, God created animals for the earth after their kind. Here again God created in kinds, or *species*. But the crowning point of creation is human life. Like the animals, humans were formed from the ground, given provision of food, and blessed with fruitfulness. But humans are far more than animals. The text shows that human life was set apart in relation to God by the divine plan, ("let us make man"), by the divine pattern, ("as our image"), and by the divine purpose, ("let him have dominion"). The expression, *let us make man* introduces the climax of God's creative activity. The divine pattern is that human life, male and female, be in the *image* of God. The term "image" (*selem*) is used in the Old Testament for actual forms and shapes of idols, (1 Sam. 6:5, 11), and pictures, (Ezek. 23:14). The term "likeness" (*demut*), which is more abstract, further explains the meaning of, "image." It describes a similarity (*e.g.*, "like a man," in Ezek. 1:10). The term "image" can be explained as personality, nature (as body and spirit), or capacity for moral decision. It does not signify a physical representation

of corporeality, for God is a spirit. The term must therefore *figuratively* describe human life as a reflection of God's spiritual nature; that is, human life has the communicated attributes that came with the breath of God, (Gen. 2:7). Consequently, humans have spiritual life, ethical and moral sensitivities, conscience, and the capacity to represent God. The significance of the word "image" should be connected to the divine purpose for human life. Human life, male and female, in this way has great capacity and responsibility by virtue of being made in the image of God. First, humans may produce life of their own. If humans are to imitate God, then creating life is a basic part of that task. A man and a woman can produce a life with a living soul. This privilege is part of their blessing from God, a blessing that includes divine enablement. For believers, childbirth is an act of worship, a sharing in the work of God, the One who created life. Second, humans are to have dominion over the world. The terms used suggest putting down opposition and were perhaps used in anticipation of the conflict with evil. The image of God in men is described in *The Westminster Larger Catechism* Answer 17, "After God had made all other creatures, he created man male and female; formed the body of the man of the dust of the ground, and the woman of the rib of the man, endued them with living, reasonable, and immortal souls; made them after his own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness; having the law of God written in their hearts, and power to fulfil it, and dominion over the creatures; yet subject to fall."

In concluding His creation, God blessed and sanctified the seventh day because on it He ceased from all His creative work (2:1–3). By the seventh day God had completely finished His creative work (2:1). The seventh day, which later became a sign of the Sinaitic covenant with Israel, reports the Sabbath of God as the blessed culmination of creation. The repetition in this last section of the narrative stresses the culmination of and cessation from creation. The key word here is *rest* (*sabat*, "to rest"; *sabbdt*, "the Sabbath"). The word actually means "cease," more than "rest." It is not a word that refers to remedying be tired after a week of work. Rather, it describes the *enjoyment* of accomplishment, the celebration of completion. God blessed and sanctified the seventh day because on it He ceased His work (verses 2–3). On the seventh day God not only ceased from His work of creation, He sanctified the day in

commemoration of it. The day belonged to God. Those who enjoy Sabbath rest must be set apart to God and must set apart their activities to Him. God, by His powerful Word transforms the chaos into a holy and blessed creation with a special day. This truth is a fundamental, basic teaching of the account of creation.

In looking at the narrative there are certain points to be drawn out. Most importantly, God is a *redeeming* God. God takes things that are dark, void and formless (like you in sin), and makes something good out of them. Christ took a few loaves and some fish and fed thousands. Little in His hands is always *much*. In making something of anything, God demonstrates Himself as the Redeemer. He is the God of reversals: that which is dark, He makes light. That which is fallen, He redeems. That which is broken, He fixes. That which is spiraling into the abyss, He rescues. Christians read the Genesis account of creation but sometimes fail to see how God often works with and in *them* in the same way.

God is God, idols are not. One must remember that *Moses* is writing this narrative. The narrative, in contrast to the illicit paganism of the day, demonstrates God as the sovereign Creator that rules over all the earth and all matter. The "gods" of the people were only sovereign over compartments like wind, air or water. In contrast, the creation narrative says *God is in control*. The significance of this point stands prominently in the activities of Israel. Their religious experience from Egypt, realized that, out of that dark and chaotic pagan world, God brought them into existence as His people teaching them the truth, distinguishing that truth from error, providing abundance for them, commissioning them to be His representatives, and promising them *theonomic* rest. Dominion, fruitfulness, and rest would be theirs in the Land of Promise. The world was plagued with pagan gods and false ideas. Israel knew they were created by the true God and that God would defile the pagans' gods in the process of establishing Sabbath rest. The point that His powerful Word was the agent of creation clearly shows us that creation must always obey that Word.

Creation is a type of Redemption, and the narrative is actually prophetical in nature. Jesus Christ is typified and explicitly taught here.

Creation was made, but void, dark and formless. The Spirit provided hope for this dark world, and applied, through the Word of God, a redemption of this void and darkness. The Spirit made everything *very good*. The Holy Spirit also overshadowed Mary, and formed Christ in her womb. How was creation made – through the Word, and by light. John 1:3 says, "All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made." Hebrews 11:3 teaches, "By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible." Christ Himself *is* the Word, and brings forth the light of the truth. When Christ was born, light came into the World. John 1:9 says that the extension of this light is that it lights every man, "That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world." Even in looking upon the lights that govern the day and night, greater and lesser, there are allusions to Christ, the Great Light, and His people, the church, the lesser light which reflect His glory. He gives His people life, as in creation where in each day God gives life to the land, sea and air.

Out of the darkened chaos God sovereignly and majestically created by the Word, the entire universe in six days, bringing about perfect order and abundant fullness through the Holy Spirit for people to enjoy and to rule. Then He blessed and sanctified the seventh day, which marked the completion of creation.[22] The New Testament uses the concept of Sabbath rest in a physical and spiritual sense. Believers have ceased from their labors and have entered into the divine rest (Heb. 4) of which the Sabbath is a *picture* of that rest. Yet there remains a rest in the world of peace come. Salvation, to the writer of Hebrews, is the new beginning of the theocratic rest begun in creation. The believer enters into a life of Sabbath rest from works and embarks on a life of holiness in that rest.

What can we learn from the creation account? We learn from the creation account that God works by His powerful Word—to create, to redeem, and to sanctify. His powerful Word, either the written Word or the living Word preached, will transform men into His glorious image. This is what happens in *regeneration*. It is impossible to read through this first explanation of creation and not see the Spirit of God changing that which is void into that which is alive. In theology we call our new life

regeneration, or being born again. The Spirit blows on whom He wishes (John 3:3) as He did first over creation. Sanctification also has some connection here. After creation was made, and for all intents and purposes regenerated, the Spirit molded it and fashioned it. That is a picture of salvation and sanctification. Meditation on this creative act is essential to anyone wishing to understand a right relationship to God.

God is a redeeming God who changes darkness to light, death to life, and chaos to blessing. In your own personal life, that which seems to be chaotic is something you must give over to the Redeemer. Christ can take that which is formless and void, or chaotic, and send forth His Spirit to renew and redeem. There is nothing too hard for the Lord. He took the primeval mess and turned it into something beautiful in creation. Yes, this world is sin ladened and fallen. Yes, we live in the midst of it. Yes, *we* are sin ladened and fallen, but God is in the act of restoration, bringing us back to a state of perfection through Jesus Christ. Trust God, not the enticements of the world that set forth a simple pleasure as an answer for life's difficulties. God is absolutely sovereign over all life, but all pagan ideas try to contend for our allegiance. What is set before our senses, in our heart, that contend for our allegiance? Every vice is out to seduce our hearts away from Christ, and toward the world. Every besetting sin, every wayward thought, every worldly distraction is out to pull you away from God. God calls you to trust Him, and His ways are *very good*.

CHAPTER 10:
THE SABBATH REST

"Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made," (Gen. 2:1–3).

In the conclusion to creation, God blessed and sanctified the seventh day because on it He ceased from His work. By the seventh day God had completely finished His work of creation. The seventh day reports the Sabbath of God as the *blessed culmination of creation*. The repetition in this last section of the narrative stresses the culmination of and cessation from creation.

We find the Sabbath as a *creation ordinance*, an ordinance set down for *all* to observe for all time. If it is revealed, it ought to be observed. Is this acceptable to say? Jonathan Edwards said, "If the Christian Sabbath be of divine institution, it is doubtless of great importance to religion that it be kept well, and therefore, that every Christian be well acquainted with the command." Moses records it as a demonstration of what God did. As a result of that resting, it should mimicked by Adam, who was placed in the garden for the *purpose* of the Sabbath.

Let's consider imitating God. Is God to be obeyed by example alone? Yes. Why? Eph. 5:1, "…be imitators of God…" John Calvin said, "It is no small stimulus to any action, for a man to know that he is imitating his Creator." We see, then, it is a *pattern* that has been set down. What is the pattern God established? The pattern is *work six days and rest one day*. That ought to be engrained in our Christian memories for all time. What kind of day was the seventh day? It was a holy day, hallowed by God, different than the six previous days, *i.e*. separating it from secular and common use and dedicating it to divine worship. He did something on

this day that He did not do on the other days. He blessed and sanctified that day. Blessing and sanctification are done *for man* not God. Would God have been robbed of something if He did not make the seventh day for himself? The Sabbath was made for Adam, for God's glory.

By example, all men should work six days and rest one. Who should do this? Adam alone? The Jews alone? All men? It is no doubt applied to all his progeny and all those who would, by faith, follow the Redeemer as His children. Before the fall, Adam loved God perfectly, with all his mind and strength, and he was issued the Sabbath. If it is issued for the good of perfect man like Adam, how much more good would it do *fallen men* to observe it? Is it, then, more *valuable* for a fallen man? What was the first day Adam enjoyed? The Sabbath day was his first day.

I want you to think about the Sabbath as Joe Israelite would. Moses writes Genesis for the people of Israel. So Joe Israelite would have had a certain idea of what God meant considering this, and how Moses writes it. So it is important to have a *Jewish idea* of this instead of a 21st century idea of it.

Now, there was a 2450 year gap from creation to the Mosaic Law. Would silence necessarily dictate that the Sabbath was not to be heeded? From the sacrifice of Abel to the time of the flood was a period of 1500 years. But we hear of *no sacrifices* from Abel's time until that time. There was no record of sacrifices given. Does this mean there were no sacrifices given to God? From the death of Moses until Jeremiah, which runs about eight centuries, there was no mention of *circumcision*. Does this mean no circumcision was performed? There is no Sabbath mentioned in Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel and 1 Kings—does this mean there was *no* Sabbath observed after the Law was given in Exodus 20? *Silence does not dictate that something was not so*.

Is the number "seven" important? Genesis 4:3 says, "in the process of time," Abel gave a sacrifice and worshiped. Literally, this term means at the, "end of days." We find in 7:2 there are seven clean animals taken into the ark. In 7:4 there are seven days. In 8:10–12, there are seven more days. In Genesis 29:27, a wedding festival lasted for a week, seven days. The length of time customary for domestic service with Jacob and

Laban lasted not seven days, but extended to seven years. In Genesis 50:10, it was a week for a funeral. In Exodus 12:3–20, the first institution of the Passover, when as yet there were no Levitical institutions, was appointed to last a week.

No one ever told the Israel upon leaving Egypt, that they were to gather the manna in an extra portion. Exodus 16:22 says, “And so it was, on the sixth day, that they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for each one. And all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses.” This is the *first account* of the manna, the Sabbath was enforced before they even settled at Sinai. This was done before they had been told by the elders to do it! Their doing so was what prompted the elders to inquire of Moses about the subject! Note the tense in verse 29, “The Lord has given you…a sabbath”, which is the *past* tense. A seventh of human life is regulated by that Sabbath.

God’s word is clear concerning the reality of the Sabbath in both the Old Testament and New Testament. Let’s consider this. What does the pattern of *six and one* mean and how was it fulfilled? In Exodus 20 the Law was given. The Sabbath is the 4th commandment. The command is *moral* which gives way to application. “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.” See how He refers to the six days of creation? The command is set as a *pattern*, but explained more fully here. It is a moral command which is binding for all time for all men. It is set right in the *middle* of the moral code. The Law of God is the perfect reflection of His nature and will and binds all rational creatures to perfect conformity in character and conduct. This command, then, is part of the Decalogue. Again, it is in the *middle* of the code. Without this Law worship would be defaced because it would mix, on that day, the sacred and profane. We would not know there is a specific time of worship, and how long that time

is set apart *for* the worship of God. Six days are used for *common* use, and the seventh day is set aside and used *for God's worship*.

Are there ceremonial Sabbaths which are extensions of this command and the Genesis demonstration? Yes. The Seventh Day seen in Lev. 23:16. The Seventh Year, in Exod. 23:11. And even indentured servants found in Deut. 15:12. But the command itself is moral though it holds others extensions.

This Law's character is both positive and negative. It is positive, "remember the Sabbath Day." There is a negative, "thou shalt do not work." It is a command to sanctify *that day*. It begins *unlike* any other command, "Remember…" (*zaw–kar'*) which is a primitive root meaning to remember, recall, or call to mind. It would be inaccurate for God to tell them to "remember" something they had not heard before. Here, though, the command is more explicit, more detailed, more classes specified, and sustained by more reasons. It does not specify *a day* but *a pattern*; *six and one*. He did not say, "Saturday", or any other day for that matter. Instead, God set a pattern of *six and one*. Work six days and on the seventh rest. Where did the Jews begin to know what day it was *supposed* to be? What does the commandment refer to? It refers to the *creation* ordinance, Gen. 2:1–3, not the ceremonial law which had not even been given yet. The ceremonial law is not even mentioned yet! The first four commandments deal with worship. We find in the first four commandments the object, mode, manner and time – uniformly set down as God's instituted way of worship. The glory of God here is the primary intended goal, and then the sanctification of the believer is its secondary effect. The day ought, then to be consecrated to God. Two verses use this word *qadash* effectively in relation to the Sabbath, "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the LORD that doth sanctify you." (Exod. 31:12–13). And also, "Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy," (Lev. 19:2). *Qadash* means to consecrate, sanctify, prepare, dedicate, be hallowed, be holy, be sanctified, or be separate. The meaning of the day is primarily aimed at the worship of God. In this way it is a sign for God's

people, “It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed,” (Exod. 31:17). And because a violation of the moral Law was a capital offense, we find that *death* is the result of breaking the Sabbath.

All lawless Christians today who reject the Sabbath need to heed this: to violate the Law of God was a *capital* offense and deserved *death*. This included the Sabbath Day. Hear the words of Numbers 15:30–35, “But the soul that doeth ought presumptuously, whether he be born in the land, or a stranger, the same reproacheth the LORD; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Because he hath despised the word of the LORD, and hath broken his commandment, that soul shall utterly be cut off; his iniquity shall be upon him. And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks upon the sabbath day. And they that found him gathering sticks brought him unto Moses and Aaron, and unto all the congregation. And they put him in ward, because it was not declared what should be done to him. And the LORD said unto Moses, The man shall be surely put to death: all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp.” Only the moral Law contains a capital offense to break it. The Lord told the Israelites to kill the man who was picking up sticks. Joe Israelite would understand that on this day he did certain things, and did not do certain other things. The Sabbath is not a ceremonial ordinance. It is a moral one, with a capital offense tied to it. What ceremonial law was ever given “death” as its wage if it was broken? *None*.

The Old Testament gives us a great look at how important it was not to do common things that God prohibited. Look at Nehemiah 10:31; 13:15–22, where business as usual was going on:

> In those days I saw people in Judah treading wine presses on the Sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and loading donkeys with wine, grapes, figs, and all kinds of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath

> day. And I warned them about the day on which they were selling provisions. 16 Men of Tyre dwelt there also, who brought in fish and all kinds of goods, and sold them on the Sabbath to the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem. 17 Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said to them, “What evil thing is this that you do, by which you profane the Sabbath day? 18 “Did not your fathers do thus, and did not our God bring all this disaster on us and on this city? Yet you bring added wrath on Israel by profaning the Sabbath.” 19 So it was, at the gates of Jerusalem, as it began to be dark before the Sabbath, that I commanded the gates to be shut, and charged that they must not be opened till after the Sabbath. Then I posted some of my servants at the gates, so that no burdens would be brought in on the Sabbath day. 20 Now the merchants and sellers of all kinds of wares lodged outside Jerusalem once or twice. 21 Then I warned them, and said to them, “Why do you spend the night around the wall? If you do so again, I will lay hands on you!” From that time on they came no more on the Sabbath. 22 And I commanded the Levites that they should cleanse themselves, and that they should go and guard the gates, to sanctify the Sabbath day. Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me according to the greatness of Your mercy!

Everything that surrounded buying and selling was *prohibited.* Not *business as usual*. The Israelites would understand what this would clearly mean.

Then we have Isaiah 56:2–9 that includes both the Israelites and the foreigner:

> Blessed is the man who does this, And the son of man who lays hold on it; Who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, And keeps his hand from doing any evil." Do not let the son of the foreigner Who has joined himself to the LORD Speak, saying, "The LORD has utterly separated me from His people"; Nor let the eunuch say, "Here I am, a dry tree." For thus says the LORD: "To the eunuchs who keep My Sabbaths, And choose what pleases Me, And hold fast My covenant, Even to them I will give in My house And within My walls a place and a name Better than that of sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name That shall not be cut off. Also the sons of the foreigner Who join themselves to the LORD, to serve Him, And to love the name of the LORD, to be His servants – Everyone who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, And holds fast My covenant – Even them I will bring to My holy mountain, And make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on My altar; For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.

Even if they are a eunuch, and if they can't have a big house with children to teach, God says He will give them something better. He does not want them to pollute the day no matter what. What does it mean to "pollute" the Sabbath? Gentiles as well as Jews are blessed by this

observance, which is a foretaste of the redemption in Christ for all nations. Hear Isaiah 58:13–14, “If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, From doing your pleasure on My holy day, And call the Sabbath a delight, The holy day of the LORD honorable, And shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, Nor finding your own pleasure, Nor speaking your own words, Then you shall delight yourself in the LORD; And I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth, And feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father. The mouth of the LORD has spoken.” What day was this? “The HOLY DAY OF THE LORD…” God’s Sabbath day. What are, “our pleasures?” Those pleasures are to be delighted in on the other six days, but the Lord’s Day we are to delight ourselves in him. To delight in something is to have *exquisite delight* as the Hebrew infers. What is a sign to us? How is the Sabbath a sign between Him and the people? It is rest and salvation which are synonymous, and which are signs to us. Psalm 118:22–24 says, “The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD’s doing; It is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day the LORD has made; We will rejoice and be glad in it.” What is signified by the stone? The stone is Christ (Matthew 21:42; Mark 12:10; Luke 20:17; Eph. 2:20–22). This is immediately linked with salvation. Christ was refused and rejected and put to death, making him the head or cornerstone, which is what is *marvelous*. This is in His exaltation which began with His resurrection. Conception is the beginning of his death, which is His humiliation.

But in his resurrection and ascension is where we find His *exaltation*. The Apostle makes this plain in Acts 4:11. The day on which this is done is made a day of rejoicing. The Old Testament Sabbath is a type of Christ and redemption to come.

The Israelites are to commemorate the Gen. 2:1–3 passage respectively. They were to look back on what God did in creation. In the new Gospel era, we will commemorate *gospel renovation*, that which Christ fulfilled in the creation ordinance which is now linked to *salvation*, not *just* creation. This is always linked to a redemptive purpose since the fall. In Jeremiah 4:22–23 the prophet talks about the earth reduced again to formlessness and the void through the fall. But in Isaiah 65:17–18 and

66:22 we find the Gospel dispensation linked to Christ's exaltation and the day we are to rejoice in.

Egypt, the house of bondage, spiritual Egypt, is a picture of sin. When did the rest for the Israelites begin? It began when they came up out of the Red Sea escaping from Egypt. "But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou. And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day," (Deut. 5:14–15). There was no rest until then. And it was not based on a specific day, as if they had to wait until Tuesday or Friday or Saturday *to worship*. The day they were released, the next day, they set as the Sabbath day.

The deliverance from Egypt culminating in the Sabbath rest was a type of the resurrection; Christ was *raised to the rest*. Such a deliverance was given to trouble the Egyptians. "And it came to pass, that in the morning watch the LORD looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians" (Exod. 14:24). Sin and bondage are overcome with the rest that Christ provides, for bondage necessarily connotes slavery to it, where in Christ is found rest. Egypt is the antitype of Christ.

In the New Testament the Sabbath is equally clear. Jesus witnessed to the ongoing Sabbath many times. "Think not that I am come to *destroy* the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no

case enter into the kingdom of heaven," (Matt. 5:17–20). The word to *destroy* means to *dissolve*; and the word *fulfill* means to make *full*, or to fill to the brim. Prophets attested to the Law. How does Jesus, "fulfill the law?" It is through His life, death, resurrection and ascension. What did Jesus do on Sabbath days? People often say, "We are no longer under the law but under grace." But what did Christ do? In Mark 3:1–6 He healed the man with the withered hand. Luke 13:10–17; 14:1–6 shows He healed the crippled woman. In John 5:1–9; 9:1–41 He healed the paralyzed man. These are works of necessity and mercy. Jesus did things *on the Sabbath*. If Jesus was going to teach the disciples that the Law is no longer needed, He would have never told them what he did in Matthew 24:20, "And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath." This is referring to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. And this would have been *two generations later*, after Christ left the earth. So ask yourself the question, *Would this be before or after Jesus' ascension*? Certainly, *after*. Does Jesus think the Sabbath *is still binding* after His resurrection? Yes He does. Could this possibly be any more clear? After Christ ascends into heaven and is interceding for us, the Sabbath day *still continues*. He instructs the disciples that the Sabbath Day *continues*. We *still* have the Sabbath day. But we call it the *Christian Sabbath* in lieu of Christ's fulfillment of changing the day, for the pattern represents *His* work in salvation, not just God's work in creation.

The Christian Sabbath is a particular day chosen by God. *God* chooses the day. We don't get to choose it. Jesus said the Sabbath Day is already set in His accomplishments (Matthew 24:20). There is a change, and it was foretold to us. Jesus says it continues, but there is a new way to remember it. The Holy Spirit's change of the Sabbath seen in the Old Testament is very clear. Isaiah 65:17–18 says that the old way of remembering it will not be remembered in the future. Deut. 5:15 says the Jews remember it for the *deliverance from Egypt* – the type, but Jeremiah 16:14–15 says, "They shall no more say…" and Psalm 118:22–24 says there is a new day coming, one, "Day the Lord has made," in which we will rejoice and be glad *in it*. And then such a day is fulfilled in the New Testament witness to the change. It is based on *Christ's resurrection*, Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:2; Luke 24:1; John 20:1. In John 20:19 Jesus visits the disciples on the first day of the week. Acts 2:1ff, Pentecost, was on the

first day of the week. The Festival of Weeks (Harvest or First fruits), was a type of this as stated in Leviticus 23:15–16. In Acts 20:6–7 Paul preached on the first day of the week then waited to leave the next day. In 1 Cor. 16:1–2 there was a collection taken from all churches in Galatia, not confined to one sect of Christians. Such an offering taken up for the saints was an act of worship as given in Phil. 4:18 and 2 Cor. 9:12–13. In Rev. 1:10 John says his vision took place on a special day – the Lord's Day. When was Revelation written? It was written after A.D. 95 – John still knew there was a special day unlike any other day. We have the *Lord's Supper* (1 Cor. 11:20) which is a very different meal than what is commonly eaten. Why is this meal different? It is holy – divided unto God. There is the *Lord's City* in Nehemiah 11:1. There is the *Lord's Temple* in 1 Kings 8:43. That which is ascribed to God as something holy and separate is special. John knew this on Patmos and was alone, still keeping the *Lord's Day*.

Then we have Hebrews 4:1–10, which in my mind puts to rest the issue *altogether*.

> Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. 2 For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it. 3 For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said: "So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest,' " although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. 4 For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way: "And God rested on the seventh day from all His works"; 5 and again in this place: "They shall not enter My rest." 6 Since therefore it remains that some must enter it, and those to whom it was first

> preached did not enter because of disobedience, 7 again He designates a certain day, saying in David, “Today,” after such a long time, as it has been said: “Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts.” 8 For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day. 9 There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. 10 For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His. The people of God have a rest.

Hebrews says this, in paraphrase. In the Old Testament the Israelites were supposed to work six days and rest one day. And that was to be *a sign*. They were to enter into the rest of God, but they didn’t because they were disobedient. They died in the wilderness. Joshua was supposed to do this through God’s guidance, but they blew it there too. It was not until Jesus Christ came, that He enters *His* rest so that *we have a rest*. And the writer parallels it here. Just like *God created* and then *ceased His work*, so Jesus, when *He finishes all His work*, He too *rests*. That in His resurrection, God raised Him from the dead. In Greek the writer uses the word for the rest of God and Christ as *katapauo*. But when he says that “we” have a rest, that we “still have a rest,” he then turns that word to *Sabbath*. In this the writer moves from *we* to *He*. God’s rest in Genesis 2 is compared to Christ’s rest here. Creation is compared to redemption (a *new kind* of creation). Christ rests as God did. Christ rested from *humiliation*. The whole church, all the duties, worship, and privileges of it, are founded in the person, authority, and actions of Jesus Christ. The first day of the week, *the day of the resurrection* of Christ, when He rested from His works, is appointed and determined for a day of rest or *Sabbath unto the church*, to be constantly observed in the stead of the seventh day, appointed and observed from the foundation of the world and under the Old Testament. We have then, the perpetuity and change of the Sabbath; but we still have a Sabbath today.

The plight of breaking the Sabbath is no less real today than it was when God's Law was first given. The Old Testament consequence in Numbers 15:32 was death. The New Testament plight is found in James 4:10 where the Moral Law is evidently being spoken of since the Apostle James quotes two commands in the next verse. "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up. Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge," (James 4:10–11). If you violate the Sabbath *you break the whole Law*. "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all," (Jam. 2:10). Christopher Plummer in his work, "The Law of God," said, "Let those who indulge in Antinomian laxity concerning the law of the Sabbath, solemnly consider the course of reasoning adopted by James and *be warned in time*."

The Christian Sabbath is for God's people. There are explicit bible passages that teach this as we have seen. They demonstrate *the pattern of rest*. Genesis 2 shows us that resting is a *now and not yet* concept. Resting is to put down your daily work and pick up the work of rejoicing in God and in Christ specifically at a time He designates.

There is the command to *remember*. Exodus 20 shows that Joe Israelite must *remember*. The Christian remembers Christ. What things about Christ should he remember? We are to remember His incarnation, life, death, resurrection, ascension and intercession. In *them* dwells our rest. Nehemiah's rebuke in Nehemiah 10:31 and 13:15–22 shows us that buying and selling on the Lord's Day is prohibited. Isaiah 58:13–14 says that we are not to be found doing our delight, but that which God's delights in for our sanctification. We are supposed to delight in God. Can a man worship merely externally? Is corporate worship simply a mere outward act? Not at all, it is a heart work that occurs the whole day through (Acts 20:6–7; 1 Cor. 16:1–2; Rev. 1:10), it is a day for worship. It is a day of remembering Christ's resurrection as particularly special. Joe Israelite would know this, and *did know this*, but in shadows. The Christian sees this clearly through Christ.

Even though God desires us to worship Him and to put down our work and pick up His work, there are also works of necessity that have to be accomplished. What is necessary to the sustaining of life? It is of two kinds. Permanent – things like preparing for church, going to it, and coming from it. There are also occasional events that have to be done – unusual events; like you are traveling to church, and in poor preparation you forgot to get gas and you are going to run out on the way, well, then *buy some gas*. But keep in mind, Matthew 12:1–12; Mark 2:23–28; and Luke 6:1–5. This is where we must hold steadfastly to the spirit of the Law not just the letter of the Law. Recreation is not necessary to the sustaining of life. It is not of necessity that it is done on the Lord's Day. The Superbowl is not a holy use of the Lord's Day it is a *profanation* of it.

But then there are works of mercy. We do what is necessary to the good of the brethren and to loving enemies. This is also of two kinds, permanent – the use of food to sustain ourselves, giving of them to family and guests and animals if we have pets. But also occasional – getting sick, visiting the sick or poor and afflicted for the purpose of administering relief and comfort, (like Christ did in Matthew 12:9–14 with the man with the withered hand). Ask yourself, "What works of mercy can we specifically set aside to do on those days?"

We are to engage in works of piety. God has sanctified the day, *so should we*. It is the separation of the day from other days. We should abstain from the common and servile works of our ordinary calling and vocations. Ezekiel Hopkins said, "The sanctification of the Sabbath doth especially consist in a diligent and conscientious attendance upon all the ordinances of God and the duties of His Worship, appointed to be performed on this day; and that, whether in public, or in private, or in secret." What does this consist in? Prayer, Hearing of the Word, Singing, partaking of the Sacrament, and Private and Family devotions. Jeremiah 10:25 is a sober warning to this effect, "Pour out Your fury on the Gentiles, who do not know You, And on the families who do not call on Your name."

We ought also to engage in the preparation of the day. How much of the Lord's Day ought we to sanctify ? If the entire command is not complied with, then none is. Prepare the night before and in the morning.

The night before set you minds to prayer. Put off worldly ideas and employments. In the morning, get up early to prepare. You are ready for work, or school, why not prepare for the Lord's Day?

How can we prepare? By reading the Word, meditating on four chief thoughts: on the works of creation and Creator, on God's holiness, on Christ's redemption for you and on the glory of heaven. We can do this by prayer. Thomas Watson said, "The tree of mercy will not drop its fruit unless the tree is shaken by prayer." We ought, therefore, to address ourselves to the hearing of the Word without distraction (1 Cor. 7:35), for vain thoughts at this time defile the ordinance at hand, and offend God; and they tend to harden our hearts; and remove the comfort we would have received. How do we get rid of them? Fix your minds upon that which you love. Thomas Watson also said, "Each Sabbath may be the last we shall ever keep; we may go from the place of hearing to the place of judging; and shall not we give reverent attention to the Word?" Know that we will give an account of every sermon we hear. Luke 16:2 is especially helpful in this, "So he called him and said to him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship." Remember that Judas heard all of Christ's sermons.

CHAPTER 11:
THE IMAGO DEI

“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth…These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground. But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground. And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads. The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; And the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone. And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia. And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates. And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of

the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him. And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed," (Gen. 1:26 and 2:4–25).

In this first section, after creation, we ask, what happened to God's creation? The passage begins with the title for the entire *todledot* (generations) section of 2:4–4:26. God creates rational beings to serve Him (verses 5–6). The first two verses of this section provide the setting for the creation of human life. The world, at this point was not growing. The world had yet to flourish with fertility. Instead, the Lord God was preparing for growth, but more important, when joined with verse 7, this part of the passage plays a subordinate role: before the earth could flourish under God's blessing, God focused his attention on the epitome of creation, human life – those created in His image. The clauses here seem to foreshadow two important notes: rain and working the ground. The ground anticipates the expulsion from the garden under the curse (3:23 in which the ground was cursed), and the mention of rain anticipates the great flood (6:17; 7:4).

Human life was then created (verse 7). One of the first things to notice is the new use of God's designation here. The Creator is now called, "the Lord God," (*Yahweh 'elohim*). What is important to notice is that the Creator / creature distinction is now becoming more intimate. This demonstrates the personal nature of God with an emphasis on the personal and covenantal nature of God. The Lord God's creative act is here portrayed with the word *ydsar*, "formed," which signifies *design*. The verb usage is given to, "the potter," who shapes the clay. What did God do? The LORD God, "formed the man from the dust of the ground." "Man," (*h'ddm*), refers to the first human, but then *also* to humankind. Since the

first man came from the ground, he and all human beings are inseparably bound to it (*cf.* Job 4:19; 10:9; Isa. 29:16). We see later that, “dust you are,” (Gen. 3:19). He gave man the breath of life. To this body of dust was imparted the, “breath of life.” This word for *breath* is used in the Bible for the life imparted to man—never for animals. This breath brings spiritual understanding (Job 32:8) and a functioning conscience (Prov. 20:27). In this breathing comes the *image* of God as man. Genesis 1:26 says, “Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” The combining of the physical body and the divine breath produces the “living being.” Israel would see that humankind was created with great care and planning, so that it would have the capacity to serve the Lord God. And without these notes on the manner and likeness of men to God, and of God’s providing men and women with these spiritual capacities, the rest of the chapter would not carry the same force.

Man is created by divine counsel. Man is placed in an exalted position because of this. Image and likeness are synonymous words used to describe in what way man is a reflection of God. In no way is man God, but he is a reflection of God. A reflection in a mirror reflects what a man does, but is not the man. God creates man and is delighted in him because he is a reflection of God. Image and likeness refer to four things in which we reflect God: intellectual, moral and spiritual righteousness, *and* holiness. The image is not *in* man. Man is *made in the image itself*.

How did God create man? God created man male and female, after His own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, with dominion over the creatures. God delights in Himself as it is seen through man’s dim reflection. He gives them the privilege of dominion, “let them have dominion (*or rule*) over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” Having dominion over God’s creation is a position of vice–regency. The word literally means, “to tread,” over the earth. Men are to reflect the God–quality of sovereignty by utilizing our spiritual, moral, and intellectual righteousness over creation. That’s also a key, righteous rule, ruling in holiness which was Adam’s responsibility.

The next section refers to humankind having the responsibility to keep God's commandments in order to enjoy life (verses 8–17). Man, created as man *and* female, is given abundant provisions (verses 8–14). They are given food through the herbs and trees. God provides for their sustenance. Since the garden also provides the setting for the covenant probation, the purpose of the lavish description of the garden must inevitably lead to the giving of the commandment—Adam can enjoy it all but must not eat the *forbidden* fruit. The focus of this description turns to the trees in the garden.

They are given the task of obedient service (15–17). The vocabulary in verses 15–17 strikingly points to the spiritual nature of the man's responsibility. First, the word translated "placed" is actually from the word for "rest" (*nuah*). It means, "placed," in this passage, but the choice of a word with its root idea of, "rest," is important especially in light of Genesis' teaching on Sabbath rest. They are placed there, "To serve it," (*the garden*) and "To keep it" (also referring *to the garden*). These two verbs are used throughout the Pentateuch for *spiritual* service. The word "keep" is used for *keeping the commandments* and taking heed to obey God's Word; "serve" (*'abad*) describes the worship and service of the Lord, the highest privilege a person can have. Whatever Adam was to do in the garden (and there is no reason to doubt that physical activity was involved), it was described in terms of *spiritual service of the Lord*. Adam was *priest* of the garden, or the sanctuary of God, in this way. Adam is to reflect the quality of sovereignty by exercising the intellectual and moral righteousness over creation.

The command to *keep* the garden refers to the Law. Verse 16 continues the emphasis with the use of the Hebrew word *siwwd*, "command," the major word for commandment in the Law. Here is the first commandment given in the Bible, and it concerns life or death for good or evil. As with God's subsequent commands, there are positive blessings and negative prohibitions, all surrounding the covenant structure (which we will talk about more as we deal with the *Covenant of Works* and Genesis 3). In this passage, all earthly goods and pleasures are at the man's disposal (stressing the idea that they, "may eat to your heart's

content"), except for this one tree of the knowledge of good and evil (the case strengthening the certainty of the death, "You shall surely die"). *The Tree of Life* was a means of preservation in the blissful state. *The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil* was its *demise*. Adam was created with a spiritual capacity to serve God and was provided with God's bounty, and must therefore live obediently in his service of God, for his life is at stake.

In the third section of the passage Adam was given a helper in serving God and keeping His commandments (verses 18–25). Here is where we find man's compliment and marriage. God intended that the man and the woman function as in spiritual union, walking in integrity, serving Him, and keeping His commandments. If this pattern prevailed, the nation would live and prosper under God's good hand of blessing. We see then, man's incompleteness (verses 18–20).

The narrative begins with the striking announcement by God that the man is not yet as God had planned to be. Adam is alone, and that state is not good. This is the only thing in creation that is not good in God's opinion. As he began to function as God's representative, naming the animals that God brought to him, he became very aware of his *solitude*. Being alone is a negative concept, for the full life is found in community (*cf*. Eccl. 4:9–12; Jer. 16:1–9).

Humankind's completeness (verses 21 –25) requires a "helper" (*'ezer*). In contrast to what leftist liberals would like you to believe, the word "Helper" is not a demeaning term. *God* is usually the one described as the, "helper," (Exod. 18:4; Deut. 33:7; 1 Sam. 7:12; Ps. 20:2; 46:1). The word essentially describes one who provides what is lacking in the man, who can do what the man alone cannot do. The man was so created in such a way that he needs the help of a partner. Deilitch, a German theologian, said, "Human beings cannot fulfill their destiny except in mutual assistance." Therefore man needs someone to help him. But the helper must be, "suitable to him," *kenegdo*, which means, "corresponding to him." This word means "according to his opposite." The woman would share the man's nature; that is, whatever the man received at creation, she too would have. So it is impossible that any other animal in the garden would work to the man's benefit this way. Genesis 1:27 makes it clear that

the image of God is, “male *and* female.” Not male and male, or female and female. The man and the woman corresponded physically, socially, and spiritually to complement each other. They become one flesh (this infers complete personal community as a spiritual unity). Adam caps this whole passage with his commentary on the woman stressing this relation with his, “flesh of my flesh” and, “bone of my bones,” and it culminates in the *paronomasia* between “woman,” and, “man.” The point of this jubilant cry is that the creation of humankind has reached its goal in the complementary partnership of man and woman.

Then we find that Moses makes a commentary on the verse. “This is why a man leaves.” The divine plan for marriage, then, is one man and one woman becoming one flesh and living together in their integrity. For the sake of the wife the man leaves the strong bond of his parents and unites with her.

The final verse informs us that the two were naked and had no shame. This poignantly relates to the people of God under Moses, as the conclusion to the passage indicates. It shows how God created Adam and Eve with a specific design and moral capacity to be His servants, warning them that before them was life or death, depending on their obedience to His commandments. Also, it stresses the *community of marriage* for their joy and help.

Here we find the doctrine of the image of God in man. Man, being the pinnacle of creation is given a prominent place, or the highest place, in the creative order. Man is special to God. There is no other created being which is higher. Some may say the angels are higher as the Scriptures attest in Philippians 2, but this is the case after the fall of man and not before. God took special care and attention to create man in the conferring of the divine counsel. Unlike the rest of creation that He just spoke and made, mankind is *special* in this way. Adam was the, “first man,” as 1 Cor. 15:5 states, and Eve is called, “the mother of all the living,” as Gen.3:20 states. Adam was made of dust, and Eve was made of Adam, from a more nobler matter than man. This should demonstrate the respect and honor the woman deserves and is respected for her role. God gave them spirits, for God is called the “Father of Spirits,” in Heb. 12:9, and Zech. 12:1 which

says that He, “forms the spirit of man within him.” Again, it is not said that man has the image of God *in* him. Rather, it is said that man is created in the image of God. 1 Corinthians 11:7, “For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man.” Man is not a container that holds something, but reflects the image in the entirety of his being – or he is *supposed* to do that. God gave Adam the responsibility to rule creation as a reflection of His image: original righteousness in knowledge, righteousness and holiness.

In knowledge, Colossians 1:10, “…that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.” Adam had clear and perfect apprehensions of God, of His nature and perfections.

In righteousness, Ephesians 4:24, “and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness…” Ecclesiastes 7:29, “God made man upright.” They were totally and completely endowed with the ability to keep God’s Law. In being given the ability, he knew every part of his duty before God and everything that needed to be accomplished before Him.

Man is required to be *holy*, Ephesians 4:24, “and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.” They were unaffected by sin, or any wicked appetite. They loved what God loved and hated what God hated. They were priests in God’s sanctuary. They were naked, and not ashamed. In this way, man was not created as some blank slate to experience and gather information, but created in righteousness, holiness and *with* knowledge. He was morally endowed.

Adam’s task was to subdue creation in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness having God–given dominion. God does all things by His powerful hand. What God does He accomplishes through His omnipotent power. Adam must use his *limited* power, God–given, to rule creation in a way which reflects God’s glory. He is to rule in order that *God* may be glorified. The Priest of God should rule the sanctuary of His dominion with knowledge, righteousness and holiness. Man, as a rational being, was placed in an earthly paradise. As a rational and religious being he was

subject to divine Law, and as a social being he was given human fellowship. Man was not created for laziness or idleness. As Adam and Eve reflected these attributes, they reflected the character of God and upheld the Law of God as they were so instructed. They are beings who will have no end having the endowment in this way of the breath of life, or soul, in them. But disobedience brought death, which was the punishment for sin. Death included physical *and* spiritual death. Sin itself brought death into the world (Rom. 5:12).

We turn to see the image of God in a practical application to us. The expression and reflection of the image of God is what we are required to be before God. Man is a soul – spirituality and immortality reside there. Man is physical – he has a rational and moral nature. Man is intellectual – in knowledge, righteousness and holiness. Man is material – he has the ability to move his physical nature and subdue creation before God. The Christian can easily relate this passage to the teachings of the New Testament. Accordingly, when people are *regenerated* they become *new* creations. They have a renewed spiritual capacity to serve God and obey His commandments. And they too see that the communal assistance within marriage is a vital part of meeting the design of the Creator. All this points them to Jesus Christ.

Christ is seen all through Scripture as the model Man. Christ is the model man (1 Cor. 15:45–47) produced by the immediate divine power of the Holy Spirit in the womb of the virgin Mary, made of her substance, but without sin, positively predetermined to holiness. In His mother's womb He was called, "that holy thing," (Luke 1:35). Men recreated in the image of God are being brought back to their former condition, but only through a Mediator. Colossians 3:9–11 says, "Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, 10 and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, 11 where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all." Ephesians 4:20–24 says, "But you have not so learned Christ, 21 if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: 22 that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, 23 and be renewed in

the spirit of your mind, 24 and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness." The Bible not only says that we are made in the image of God, but also conformed *into* the image of Christ, the *model man*. Romans 8:29 states, "For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren." 2 Corinthians 3:18 explains, "But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord." We are taught not to increase in the image of God, but increase *to the stature of the fullness of Christ*. This is not copying the image of the divine Son, as the second person of the Trinity, but of that of the *Messiah*, the Incarnate Word of God. He is the image of the Father, and we are to become like Him in His image.

God is most concerned with Himself and the demonstration of His image. We should learn how all God's love may be resolved into His love to himself. Adam reflected that which was good, very good, as a result of being a direct creation of God. But God delighted Himself in Adam as being a direct image of Himself. This does not make God vain because God must, out of necessity, enjoy that which is *most* pleasing. That is *Himself*. So when we talk about man as the image of God, it is impossible to escape the reality that it is God's reflection, God's wonderfulness that is really the topic. Man has been gifted with being a steward of such a fine gift, and should use it so wisely that God delights to see that man reflect His image. God delights in himself. God only delights in Himself. What would God delight in you if Christ were not present in you? His love to the creature, to Adam for example, is only his inclination to glorify Himself, and to communicate Himself. He desires to see His delight in Himself glorified, and in Himself communicated. There is His delight in the act, and in the fruit. God delights in Himself *only*. Is this hard to accept? The act is the exercise of His own perfection, and the fruit is *Himself* expressed and communicated. Christ, then, gives men the ability to again allow God to delight in them by renewing them to reflect God's image in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, with dominion over the earth. Though men are fallen, they are still created in God's image. That image is marred, and it must be restored. It is not taken away, but *ruined*. Christ, the model man made in God's image, as the only Mediator between God and man restores

that image back to its rightful state. When the image is restored, then men, again, as servants of Christ and God, demonstrate a resolve to act in accordance with that image to please God, or allow God to see Himself in them and be pleased.

If you have been renewed, how do you reflect the image of God? How are you conformed to Christ amidst the world around you? Answering this will determine whether God delights in Himself *in you*. This is your goal. In every area and aspect of your life, you should be concerned with God delighting in you. We often neglect thinking this way because we use the excuse that we are fallen. But God has created you in such a way, and renewed that creation in Christ as a Christian so that you would reflect His glory and His attributes. What do you do, then, so that God delights in Himself in you? Do you see Christ in you? If you are unable to see Christ clearly in you, God still can see Him in you very clearly for He delights in such things. And whether it is a bruised reed or a smoking flax, God's sees His reflection with great *eagerness*, and desires to see it cultivated and enhanced to illuminate more of Himself in you. Your usefulness in the kingdom is a direct result of the cultivation of your spiritual desires and dispositions for His glory. The more such things are cultivated, the more you are conformed to His image, and the more you reflect Him. It should be the aim of every renewed being to reflect more of God and of Christ. Their work, their play, their recreation, their family involvement, their stewardship, their possessions, their devotions, *etc*., all point God to consider the worth of the creature in its ability to reflect His attributes. Do you squander such, or cultivate such things? Can you see God image in you?

CHAPTER 12:
THE COVENANT OF WORKS

"And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," (Gen. 2:15–17).

We come to a very important section of the sacred text dealing with *obedient service*, (verses 15–17). We must retrace some steps and remind ourselves of an important aspect of the last chapter. It surrounds *spiritual* service. The vocabulary in verses 15–17 vividly points to the spiritual nature of the man's responsibility. First, the word translated, "placed," is actually from the word for "rest" (*nuah*). This is very important especially in light of Genesis' teaching on Sabbath rest. Adam was placed in the garden to tend it, to service it, to keep it. "To serve it," and, "To keep it," are two verbs used throughout the Pentateuch for *spiritual* service. "Keep," (*sdmar*) is used for keeping the commandments and taking heed to obey God's Word; "serve," (*'abad*) describes the worship and service of the Lord, the highest privilege a person can have. Whatever Adam was to do in the garden it was described in terms of spiritual service of the Lord. As said before, Adam was priest of the garden, or the sanctuary of God. Equally, the *covenant* that God placed Adam in was not an option for man. The instruction in verse 16 continues the emphasis with the use of *siwwd*, "command." Again, be reminded, that this is the *first* commandment given in the Bible, and it concerns life or death for good or evil for Adam and all his posterity.

Let's turn to the theology behind the *Covenant of Works*. There are three elements of the *covenant*. 1) A promise of eternal life. 2) Prescription of the conditions for obtaining the promise. And, 3) Penal sanction against transgressors of the conditions of the covenant. God requires the complete sanctification of the parties involved in the covenant *or* He threatens punishment.

The penal sanction is death (Gen. 2:17). Death is the consequence of sin and therefore *not* natural. Genesis 2:17 says, "…but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." The rebellious and disobedient (and those alone) are those set with the consequences of the punishment. Death will follow as a consequence of eating the forbidden tree. The *sacrament* of the tree of knowledge of good and evil signified the promise of the covenant. There is a sealing of the covenant in the sign of the tree. It is also signified the curse of the covenant. John Calvin said, "If man is found disobedient, he should be doomed to the greatest calamity, the exceeding evil and wretchedness of which he should at last know by experience." When a man partakes of the sacraments, he comes under an oath and curse, and makes himself liable to punishment if he deals treacherously with God. Sin here expressed is the transgression of the symbolic law. The Law seen here is in the tree of the knowledge of Good and evil, the more full expression of the Law of God. Punishment for sin is in accord with God's authority and justice. Punishment to sin is joined to these words. Adam will be punished and die if he eats of the tree. The text tells us, "dying, thou shalt die." The term death is used generally to include all its meanings. It is to be taken in all of its meaning, not just physical death. Death surrounds everything that this penal sanction, that this just declaration should pronounce. This is spoken to Adam as the head of mankind. Corporeal and spiritual death on behalf of all men as the outcome of his disobedience. Penal sanction against such a breach would be administered immediately. The moment he finished his sin in eating the fruit, he felt the change and it began immediately.

There are various meanings of death in Scripture. Simple, death is the separation of body and soul. The soul becomes unfit for the body. Genesis 3:19, "For dust you are, And to dust you shall return." The soul cannot stay in the contaminated flesh that is wicked and sinful and dying. When the bible speaks about the body as dust, it is always negative. Abraham (Gen 18:27) says he is dust and ashes. David (Psalm 103:14) knows our frame (Gen 8:21 an evil frame) as dust. The serpent is said to have dust as its food in crawling and slithering on its belly. In Isaiah 65:25, dust is the sinful flesh. Death means vanity or frustration of this life

along with its pain and miseries. Death represents everything opposite to happiness. Hear the full text in Genesis 3:16–19, “To the woman He said: “I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; In pain you shall bring forth children; Your desire shall be for your husband, And he shall rule over you.” Then to Adam He said, “Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat of it’: “Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, And you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; For dust you are, And to dust you shall return.” Paul says in 2 Cor. 11:23, “Are they ministers of Christ? – I speak as a fool – I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often.” Death, as in the passage at hand, means spiritual death. Paul says in Ephesians 4:18, “having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God.” Eph. 2:1, “who were dead in trespasses and sins.” Death also means eternal death of body and soul. 1 Tim. 5:6, “But she who lives in pleasure is dead while she lives.” In this way those that wander the earth without the regenerating power of the Spirit of God are as living carcasses or *zombies*. They are materially alive but spiritually dead. Such a death demonstrates itself as corrupt in all faculties of the soul, void of all spiritual wisdom. Such a death denotes the wicked in contrast to the covenant people of God. It renders a man vile and unable to do good of any kind that is pleasing to God, or in line with His commands.

Death also refers to the terrors of an evil conscience because it is eternal. Revelation 14:11 says, “And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.” In hell sinners will rejoin their body in everlasting destruction by the wrath of God on them for their wickedness. This torment will last *forever*. It is a punishment that is eternal. Matthew 25:46 says, “And these will go away into everlasting punishment.” Mark 9:44 states, “…where, “Their worm does not die, And the fire is not quenched.”“ All the actions and thoughts of every person shall be tried in the judgment, and those not under the blood of Christ shall be eternally damned. Romans 2:16 tells us, “…in the

day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel."

Next, we must consider that the penal sanction for sin is *necessary*. It is first based on the majesty of God. God is a jealous God for His own glory and majesty. Exodus 34:14, "For you shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God." God cannot deny Himself; He cannot deny His supreme majesty. 2 Timothy 2:13 says, "If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself." Such a non–denial is the manifestation of the jealousy of God that is seen here against sin. He must punish wickedness due to His majestic nature, for everything opposed to Him must of necessity be eternally punished. Then consider adding holiness to God's majesty. A holy God cannot be peaceably joined with a sinner without satisfaction made to His justice. 2 Corinthians 6:14 says, "Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?" In verse 17 the apostle explains that whoever touches sin cannot commune with that which is holy. Witsius says, "It is not suitable to the holiness of God to cultivate a friendship with a sinner, so long as he continues as such." This kind of person is the covenant breaker whom God rejects, for a holy God cannot look upon sin (*i.e.* peaceably dwell with someone practicing it). Hab. 1:13 says, "You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, And cannot look on wickedness." The Hebrew here means, "to continue to look on." And so we see, contrary to popular evangelicalism, a holy God hates sin *and* the sinner who commits such sin. Deut. 25:16, "For all who do such things, all who behave unrighteously, are an abomination to the LORD your God." Psalm 5:4–6, "For You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness, Nor shall evil dwell with You. The boastful shall not stand in Your sight; You hate all workers of iniquity. You shall destroy those who speak falsehood; The LORD abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man." Unregenerate sinners shall not go unpunished. A holy God cannot be like a sinner who will not punish sin. Unless God punishes the sinner, He becomes like the sinner in denying Himself. In turn, God manifests His holiness when He punishes the wicked. Lev. 10:3 says, "And Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the LORD spoke, saying: 'By those who come near

Me I must be regarded as holy; And before all the people I must be glorified.' So Aaron held his peace."

We also must add to majesty and holiness, the justice of God. Justice is an essential attribute of God. Rom. 2:5, "But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." God's justice demands that sin be punished with *death*. Rom. 1:32 says, "Who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them." This must be done for God to stay consistent with His character.

The penal sanction of death is based upon the just nature of God. Eternal death is not an arbitrary sanction. It depends on the *holy* nature of God. Job 33:12–13, "For God is greater than man. Why do you contend with Him? For He does not give an accounting of any of His words." It is a just act based on holiness and Law, (and as we have seen Law is simply a reflection of who God is.) Many people today miss this idea thinking that since a particular sin is *finite*, then God is unjust for punishing a *finite* sin for all *eternity*. Should not the punishment equal the duration of the sin committed? But as mention, sin is *infinite* in relation to its attack upon God who is *infinite*, (though not in an absolute sense since there are degrees of sin), therefore punishment must be infinite as well. If the sin committed is against an infinite God, then the sin is infinitely affecting God and His retribution and punishment ought, necessarily, to be infinite as well. It would be inconsistent for God to punish an infinitely affecting sin against His nature in a finite timeframe. It is committed against an infinite God, so sin must be of infinite duration. It cannot be removed but by Christ's blood, otherwise it stands forever.

God is not to be served in vain. Obedience to His commands will never go spiritually unrewarded. The one serving God cannot serve himself, but must be a servant of God's word and Law. It is, then, by faith alone that pleasure can be brought to God since God requires all things to be done in accordance with regenerating faith. Heb. 11:6 says, "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God

must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." Such a true faith is rooted in the word and promise of God. Rom. 10:17 explains, "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God." If no promise had been made to man, man would have lived without hope, and a lack of hope is a characteristic of the fall. Eph. 2:12 says, "That at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world." God's word to Cain was quite poignant in Gen. 4:7, "If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it." Acceptance was not a concept that was instituted after the fall. If Adam had done what was acceptable before God, he would not have fallen. But, the very threatening of punishment infers a promise if the one working is rightly accepted. Adam would have had a continuation of the joy set before him *if* he obeyed. So, it is vital to understand that the covenant with Adam was not established without promises. God promised Adam eternal life, that is, the most perfect fruition of Himself, and that forever, after finishing the course of his obedience.

In lieu of the covenant made with Adam, we also find the symbolic Law given. This symbolic law was the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Gen. 2:26–17, "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; "but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." We are not certain, Witsius explains, whether this was one tree or the species of tree. But nevertheless, the restriction on this tree was placed as outlined in Genesis 2. Here we find two reasons for the symbolic Law. The first is in respect to God, to test and try man's obedience. Would he swerve to disobedience? Hezekiah was *tested*. 2 Chron. 32:31 says, "God withdrew from him, in order to test him, that He might know all that was in his heart." With respect to man in the garden this test was a directive to fulfill the probatory Law with the reward of eternal life and punishment of eternal death. In this probation period Adam sustained a two–fold relation to the covenant. First he was as man. As the Westminster divines wrote, "A rational creature, under the law of God, innocent, created after the divine image and endued with sufficient powers to fulfill all righteousness." Man had charge over this image that

God gave to him. What will he do with it? But he was also there in a second way, as head and root, or *representative* of all mankind. The whole of history proves this fact as he was the first man to whom was spoken the creation ordinances and mandate. And if Adam disobeyed, his disobedience would be passed onto Adam's posterity. This happened as a penal sanction. Romans 5:12 says, "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned." This is in direct contrast to the second Adam, who is Jesus Christ, who entered into His covenant with God and fulfilled it *perfectly*. Consider carefully Romans 5:13ff, "For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many."

Adam had to keep the Law that God gave him in the garden in three ways. A perfect three–fold keeping of the Law was *required*. First, of parts with respect to subject and object: in other words, the whole man, body and soul, had to keep the whole law, right down to his *tongue*. Psalm 37:30 says, "The mouth of the righteous speaks wisdom, And his tongue talks of justice." Every part of man had to keep the Law perfectly. Secondly, of degrees: man had to keep the Law with *all* diligence and heart. Christ says in Matthew 22:37, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." Deut. 6:5–6, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart." Thirdly, of perseverance: man had to persevere in keeping the Law *without fault*. Deut. 27:26, "'Cursed is the one who does not confirm all the words of this law.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'"

The promise made to Adam in the garden was eternal life. The Law itself was ordained to life. Now many Christians misunderstand the nature of the Law and think *it is bad*. They think that the Law *only* brings death and that it was *designed* to bring death. And then they go and quote

Galatians 3:21, “Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law.” But it is not that the Law *created* death. Rather, it is only death to those who are fallen and unregenerate. There is no way that the Law, in and of itself, is deadly. Otherwise, God would be dead being a perfect representation of the Law, or of His attributes. Rather, to unregenerate men who have no Spirit from Christ to help them keep the Law, or reflect who God is perfectly, the Law *then* brings death. But for Adam, the establishment of the Law for him in the *Covenant of Works* was a thing which was agreeable to him. It is most agreeable to have promises in a covenant. If there was no reward, what kind of covenant would it have been? God would act unjustly against His character of rewarding those who diligently seek Him and, all of Theology Proper would come crashing to the ground. God would then violate His character. It cannot be said for sure that Adam’s paradise would have been made heaven if he had kept the Law, but in any case, Adam would have received a greater reward, and a greater manifestation of God’s character to Him in keeping covenant with God. Unfortunately Adam fell. And he took all of mankind into the depths of hell with him. If it were not for God being gracious, no man would ever be saved. So God sent Christ; Jesus came to do what the Law, now, could not do because man sinned. Romans 8:3, “For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh.” Had it not been for sin, *that Law would have brought men to eternal life*. Romans 7:10, “And the commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death.” Paul says that the Law which *was to bring life*, instead, brought death because unregenerate men cannot please God. Jesus came to procure eternal life, therefore eternal life was promised to man from the beginning in the covenant God made with Adam. If Adam persevered, he would have received what we received by faith in Jesus Christ. Instead, because of the fall, Christ, the second Adam, earned eternal life for us. He did what Adam did not do. This should now be exceedingly *plain* to anyone thinking through the two Adams.

The broken covenant is extrapolated throughout all of Scripture. It is mentioned in almost every chapter in some respect. Hosea 6:7 says,

“But like Adam they transgressed the covenant; there they dealt faithlessly with me.” Romans 5:12, “Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.” Adam was the root of mankind, even of Eve herself, for she came from his rib. Now, due to the fall, the character or relation of God and man is different. Those under the *Covenant of Works* today who are not redeemed are under the stipulations and penal sanctions given to Adam. But those redeemed and regenerated are under the work of Jesus Christ who fulfilled the law for them.

How does the *Covenant of Works* differ in relation to the covenant we have in Christ today? In the idea of “works,” a *Covenant of Works*, God manifests Himself as supreme Law–giver and chief good desiring to make man a partaker of His eternal happiness. In the *Covenant of Works* there is no mediator. Adam was on his own, by the Spirit’s help. It is a matter of who fulfills or does not fulfill the obligations or stipulations of the covenant. The promise obtained in *Covenant of Works* would have been obtained by merit whereas in the *Covenant of Grace* it is obtained by grace. *Works* requires us to think about the covenant as working for a reward by debt. In the *Covenant of Works* eternal life was conditioned upon *man’s mutable obedience*. The special end of the *Covenant of Works* was the justice, holiness and goodness of God. Adam was required to uphold the character of God’s person in the Law reflecting God’s glory perfectly. We know he did this for a time, but did not ultimately do it for *all* time, (which was *required* in the covenant). It was temporary, and the penal sanction was built upon one single act of disobedience. After that one single act of sin, Adam fell.

We should, briefly, apply the *Covenant of Works* and look at some lessons to be learned from the symbolic law. First, God is Lord of all things. As seen in the garden, man cannot even desire an apple without asking God for permission. In all things God is to be consulted by us as to what we should do, for man’s true happiness is placed in God alone. He alone is to be the source of joy. This presses us to consider that we ought to be satisfied with what God gives us. And it should further press us to think that there should be more joy in the divine precept than there is in all the world’s pleasures for us. Here we ought to desire the greater good or

reward upon Christian obedience which is only found though the power of Christ. Adam knew that if this time of trial was over, that there should be something better. In this light, reward is part of the obedience offered in making God the center of our joy.

True happiness is obtained only by obedience. 1 Timothy 1:5 says, “Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith…” Such a happiness is a memorial of our duty towards God. Adam should desire the chief good – God is the chief good, not the fruit that seemed pleasing to the eye. Man should not go after that which is simply pleasing to the body. God’s rule is the supreme authority before man, which Adam should have followed as signified by the tree.

There is no attainment to the life of true happiness but by perfect obedience. And in this way even man in innocence should respect God with a measure of awe and majesty unless he should fall into sin. Had Adam obeyed, he would upon his trial have come to the knowledge and sense of his good to which he was called, and had a natural desire after, even eternal life and consummate happiness. The tree of life was a means of preservation in the blissful state. The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil was a detriment to it. Adam was created with a spiritual capacity to serve God and was provided with God’s bounty. He must therefore live obediently in his service of God, for his life is at stake. Christians ought to think the same in relation to Christ. Such is the determining factor to consider whether you are truly in the faith or not. If the Christian does not live in accordance to Christ’s holy Law is that an argument that he is not regenerate? Can we truly tell a tree by its fruit? Or was Christ lying when he said, “You can tell a tree by its fruit.” Consider this as applied to your walk with God.

CHAPTER 13:
THE TEMPTATION

“Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? 2 And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: 3 But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. 4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: 5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. 6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. 7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons,” (Genesis 3:1–7).

We see in the temptation in Genesis 3 that men are disobedient to God, and in this the narrative answers *how* the human race fell into depravity and sin. God did not *create* men in sin, but sin entered the garden through deception.

As this passage is read, one must keep in mind that the central axiom in which the entire narrative revolves is that *it is the word of God*. That is the key to the entire passage. How would the nation of God’s people in Israel receive the word of the Lord? This is what Moses is thinking about concerning what lessons they can take away from this narrative as it applies to the Law. They receive God’s Law in the commandments. They see what God requires. How then could Adam’s integrity turn into guilt? How could this apply to them? What would *they* do with temptation?

The narrative itself answers or demonstrates to us why the Lord Jesus Christ had to come, die and be resurrected. He is now in heaven

presently interceding for His people as High Priest. Why? This narrative gives us the answer to all those questions. It describes the fall of man. It demonstrates to us *why* the first citizens in the world are *disobedient*. It was a result of our first parents. Their result of partaking of the forbidden fruit plunged humanity into sin.

The text says, “The serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which Lord God made.” The serpent was a snake *with legs*. This creature was used by Satan, possessed of the devil, and God allowed such to take place. God *allowed* Satan to speak through a snake because snakes don’t talk. Balaam’s donkey was allowed to speak in Numbers 22 by the *power of the angel*. Serpents don’t talk. Animals don’t regularly talk. The devil motioned the serpent to speak.

Now, the serpent was *craftier* or “cunning” than any beast of the field. Satan chose the serpent because of the qualities it possessed. It was cunning in its manner and disposition and so the serpent spoke *to the woman.* “And he said to the woman has God indeed said you shall not eat of every tree of the garden?” Note that Moses in writing this was not concerned about the *origin* of evil and he was not concerned about the *nature* of the snake. He is primarily concerned with what the snake *said*. The record we have is not something given to men before the fall, but *in spite of the fall*. That is why *we* have Genesis. Adam did not have the book of Genesis or the writings of Moses. He only had what God communicated to him. Pre–fallen Adam had complete knowledge of things, though shrouded in mystery, that we ask about today. Such as, where do people come from? Adam had all knowledge and walked in perfect communion with God. But Moses is writing not because he wants to tell us where the origin of evil came from and not because he wanted to tell us about the nature of the serpent, and the strangeness about its disposition. This particular narrative is a precise account about what Moses wants *fallen* human beings to know.

The serpent did *not* know exactly what God said to Adam and Eve concerning the trees of the garden. We have no record in Scripture that God allowed the devil into the creation sanctuary. As a matter of fact, it is most sure that the opposite is true. But the serpent, no doubt, familiarized

himself with Adam and Eve for a time in order to gain some knowledge of what God had spoken to Adam, which Adam communicated to Eve.

The serpent asks a question. The nature of the Hebrew terminology here is unclear in terms of the serpent's question. It is as though he said, "I'm not exactly sure what God has asked, but were you told to do such and such?" The serpent uses the term *God*, not the covenanted term *YHWH. Yahweh* is used only with those who are God's covenant elite. So the serpent simply says, "God, has God indeed said…?" The question raised was not an easy one to answer, necessarily. It did give Eve the ability to justify the commandment and defend God. But that is not what she did. Even so, *Adam* was supposed to do that as the priest of God's sanctuary, who was standing right there as the exchange took place between the serpent and his wife.

So, the serpent asks about, "every tree," of the garden. It is a bit unclear in the way it is worded. The serpent *may* have meant all of the trees, or any particular trees, but he wasn't sure. The garden was the protected area which God made. The very word *garden* means *shield from danger* or *hedge of protection*, and so the integrity of the human response was the target of the serpent's question. In attempting to strike at the human race in the most vulnerable point, the serpent directs his question to Eve, not the priest of the garden, and to the one to whom was taught what God said, not the one who was the direct recipient of the original message.

"And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, "You shall not eat it nor shall you touch it, lest you die." Now, is it not strange that Eve didn't run away or jump when the serpent began to speak? Though this may be somewhat speculative, she probably stayed there because a talking snake is *interesting*. It is certainly not a common occurrence, but Moses does not record that she was startled or taken back. She *answers* the serpent. She began speaking with the serpent, and she restates her interpretation of the word of God. Her words are *not* the same as Genesis 2:17. She does two things to God's word here. She adds to God's word by saying, "nor shall you touch it," but God *never*

said that. And she quickly turned the command into a probability, “maybe we will die.” She weakened the word, and on that note alone she violated God’s word. She did not retain the original command Adam taught here. Adam, though, *still remained silent*. It could be, but is unlikely, that Adam had instructed her incorrectly in God’s command. God has stated, “in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” These words have a double repetition, as if to say, “the time that you eat it, dying you shall die.”

God had not said that they could not *touch* the tree. Eve, at that particular note, became a Pharisee. Pharisees add something extra to the Law where there was nothing in the command. There was nothing to prevent them from cutting down the tree and making a house of wood from it. There was nothing that said they could not examine the chemical composition of the leaves, or use the flowers for decoration. They were told *not to eat its fruit.* God did not remove from it scientific study or any kind of industrial use. Eve’s simple addition brought the whole meaning and scope of their dominion before God into question. They were to be *sovereign* over creation, not subjected to a serpent. Even before taking the fruit Eve had already began to shift the reference point from God’s interpretation to her own. She *sinned* before the fall even occurred. Why, then, did they not fall at that point? The answer lies in the fact that Adam was the federal head of mankind. The fall occurs when *Adam* takes the fruit to eat it.

The Tempter’s denial of the Word in Genesis 3:4, says “Then the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die.” When the serpent saw that the woman had not retained a precise knowledge of God’s word he denied the penalty of death, “you shall not surely die.” Christ said in John 8:44, “When he speaks a lie he speaks from his own resources for he is a liar and the father of it.” The Tempter’s explanation comes out of God’s motive in verse 5, “For God knows that the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God knowing good and evil.” The serpent raised doubts about the integrity of God in order to justify the disobedience. It was as if he was saying God is holding you back and to become divine like him you need to take and eat the fruit of the tree. Is this not a curious way to achieve divinity like God – to *disobey*? The serpent relates God’s character with man’s character, you will be like Him

and He will be like you. *See Eve, God is as flexible as you are about all this.* Yet, what Eve does not realize is that in the deception, the goodness of God must be disobeyed. His justice must be disobeyed. His holiness must be disobeyed. Man, at the suggestion of *Satan,* would himself be as good as just and as holy as God is. Man would set up his own goodness against God's goodness, he would sit in judgment of the command, and he would become more perfect and pure than God moving into the realm where God knows good and evil. *Duty* becomes a byword.

And so suddenly there is an appeal to the senses and passions in Genesis 3:6, "So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate." She picked its fruit and she also gave her husband, who was with her, the fruit, and he ate it. The food was *good, beautiful* and held the *potential for wisdom.* Three things here are interesting which somewhat reflects 1 John 2:16, "For all that is in the world — the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life — is not of the Father but is of the world." The appeal of the fruit to be divine, to be like God, was now the occasion of the sin instead of a barrier. The words "pleasant," and "desirable," are cognates of the tenth commandment to *covet*.

Eve took, she ate; she gave; he ate. First, the narrative was descriptive, but now it moves very quickly. Adam ate without being deceived. He simply went along with it as willful conformity to sin. 1 Timothy 2:14 says, "And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression." Adam willfully sinned, and the constitution of the covenant was broken.

Now we see clearly the breaking of the covenant, Genesis 3:7, "Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings." Their eyes were opened. They saw more; but what they now saw they *spoiled by* seeing. They were naked, which now was shameful as a result of sin, and they attempted to hide their shame by covering it with leaves. Certainly the futility of their minds was being demonstrated. Leaves would hide them? God would not know? They could fix what they

broke? Calvin says that by sewing fig leaves together, “that they may keep God at a distance, as by an invincible barrier!” All of this pointed them to a demonstration of their depravity before God. They now had darkened minds. How dark would a mind have to be in order to believe that withering fig leaves ripped from a branch would somehow alleviate the consequence of their sin before God? It is *insanity*. The saying is true, *sin makes people stupid.*

So they were deceived quickly. They fell in their sin as a result of their passion and the serpent deceived Eve, she gave to her husband, and he fell. I want to focus in on a main doctrine of the text surrounding the axiom of the word of God. People, or angels, or devils for that matter, must never at any time change the word of God. Eve changed God’s word. She turned God’s word into her own words. What is going on here? It is a debate of sorts over who said what and why the serpent said what he said to the woman. But what did God say? As God spoke, there is no doubt as to what He said. His word is the standard, the objective standard that determines the objective nature of the discourse that the created creature is to follow. But Eve turned the objective word into her own personal *subjective* idea. We must always remember that the truth of God is *independent of the observer*. His word in this way is objective and we must never, at any point for any reason, change the word of God. We must not add to it, nor diminish it. Once we do, we give opportunity to the devil to step in. That means he steps in within the framework of our daily life (as he did with Eve) or in the pulpit (when ministers add or take away from the word,) or at any other opportune time. The devil is diametrically opposed to the word of God. He’s out to change it and to make us doubt its truthfulness or impact.

In probing Eve, he cunningly deceived her by casting doubt on *God’s veracity*. He found out what the command was, at least what he *thought* the command was, and deceived her by adding in disbelief. When you question what people think, they pause; as if I asked you to explain what Romans 1:8 means, and no matter what you said, I make a strange face and then say “Are you really sure?” I place some doubt in your mind to rethink what you said. The devil doesn’t want God’s people to get the word of God right. He wants to dilute it in our mind as best as he can, and

cast as much doubt on its truthfulness as possible. What an awful thing it is when the devil has Christian men and women know the word of God *in error*, and live for that word in some erroneous way. They are supposed to be equipped to fight and to be sanctified and to please God, but in their error, they are simply opening the door up to the devil.

Christ, in the wilderness when He fought the devil, *reclaiming the garden incident*, used in His arsenal the term, "it is written," over and over. He fought the devil with the word of God. In the original garden, it was an attack on the character of God. In the wilderness with Christ it was an attack on the character of God as well. In such cases, God's *trustworthiness* is on the line. When you deal with the word of God and its trustworthiness, it should be believed *because it is the Word of God*. One cannot believe God and *not* believe God *at the same time*. Eve ought to have trusted God's word more than she did. God is the one who sets the standard of truth, and we molest God and His truth when we change it. God sets the standard, and Satan is out to change the standard, to twist it to people's destruction. If the standard was brought into question, as it was by the devil in the garden, Eve should have turned to Adam, asked him for help, and Adam should have struck down the serpent first with words, then with a sword. Yet, she didn't do that. She didn't even *consult* him. She simply took it upon herself to take up a role she was *not* designed for, and Adam abdicated his role by allowing her to listen to the devil. They should have both called out to God for help. God would have reinforced that standard immediately. Instead, they chose to take it upon themselves to deal with that situation, or not deal with it in the case of Adam, and they fell.

Christians should always uphold the word. Adam and Eve were perfect and *still* managed to mangle the word of God. Christians are *fallen sinners;* how much more careful must Christians be upholding the word God! God looks upon men in a certain way. He looks upon His people as a certain kind of people. Isaiah 66:2says, "On this one I will look…" God says, "…on him who is poor, of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at my word." As a whole, The Christian ought to hold the Word in high regard. No Christian has an adequate understanding of the word. Part of the Christian walk is to *trust* the word of God and *tremble* at it. It is God's

word. Not simply some practical advice. Contained within His word are descriptions of God Himself, both in His preceptive will and His decretive will. God's word is that which casts knowledge upon everyone's eternal state, and of their communion with Him. It demonstrates whether men shall reside in heaven or hell, whether they enter heaven, if they are saved, or if they go to hell, if they are lost. If Christians were really concerned with the gravity of not misrepresenting God's word we should hear them say daily, *I tremble at what I find in the word of God*. It instructs us how to live godly lives. It reminds us often concerning what is contained in it that we should never neglect it. It tells us that we don't live godly lives as we should. Is it not a wonder why people neglect reading it? It often tells them what they don't like to hear – they are sinners before God who need daily help. Jeremiah Burroughs is very right when he says this, "It is to be understood that when I come to hear or read the word I come to hear or read that which has so much quickness, that in fact, every sermon I hear, I fear I must expect to be nearer to heaven or nearer to hell."

Although it's not necessarily present here in Genesis 3 as it is in other areas, also we know the devil himself trembles at God's word. The devils, "believe and tremble," (James 2:19). Proverbs 1:7 says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge of the holy one is understanding." In that way knowledge produces fear, wisdom is the proper application of knowledge and fear is the beginning of wisdom. So, this one true God looks at the one who trembles before His word. Those are the Christians He takes notice of. If Christians want to be right, they must know things about God, right things, that are designated to be known *rightly* in his word. They are never to be twisted, never changed, never added to, and never taken away. They are to be believed.

So, here we turn to some application of this for us. God *never* gives us the right to be wrong about His word. We are never to change God's word. As the word of God will never change, but it will cease to be God's word if you change it. It becomes something else. And that, "something else," will have no power in your life to mortify sin or sanctify you as a Christian. In essence the Word will never change but it will cease to be God's Word when someone adds to it, or takes something away from it. A half–truth is a whole lie. When we change something in God's Word,

we change the Word from being the truth and standard to being a lie. It's not what God said.

The serpent was trying to discover God's truth in order that he may twist it. He even wanted *to know* the truth. Today he knows the Word better than you or I, and he is out to confound and confuse you about it. Adding to God's word implies that His word is not sufficiently clear as it stands, and removing some of God's word implies that our minds are capable of deciding that God may possibly be wrong about some details. How wrong do you think God is? Do you fair better than Eve? Do you want to say that to God? Is the Word sufficient? Is God possibly wrong about *some* details? Can you imagine someone saying that to God when they stand before him on judgment day, "But I believed it this way..." God will send them to hell for such pride. Instead, Christ says in John 8:32, "… and the truth shall set you free." Again, God never gives us the right to be wrong about His Word. His Word and His name are so inexplicably linked that they cannot be separated or used in an ill fashion without bringing harm to both. When you misquote, change, or add to the word of God you demonstrate your irreverence of the Word. Such is using God's very name in vain. We ought to be sanctified by the truth, not out to change it, or bring doubt upon it. John 17:17 says, "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth."

When we change the Word of God we sin before God and His Son Jesus Christ. It is a *sin* to change the word by adding to it or taking away from it. Deuteronomy 4:2 says, "You shall not add to the word which I commanded you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I commanded you." You can't keep God's commandments if you change them. Why? Proverbs 30:5–6 says, "Every word of God is pure; He is a shield for those who put their trust in Him. Do not add to His words, lest He rebuke you, and you found to be a liar." The Word is pure; keep it that way in your mind. Revelation 22:18–19 says, "For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this

book." Adam and Eve were *expelled* from the Garden for changing God's Word, giving into temptation and partaking of the forbidden fruit. Adam's iniquity, in running headlong into sin to disregard the barrier and duty of the Word, plunged *the entire human race into misery*. Misery is continually compounded by everyone who disregards the truth of the Word. We must not add anything to it, or take anything away from it.

So much of what divides the church today would fall by the wayside if people simply did their homework. We need to stop being so lazy about God's Word and take the time it deserves to understand it correctly. How do we keep from changing the Word? There is no way around this – in a word – *study* it thoroughly. "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth," (2 Tim. 2:15). Keep in mind, Paul is speaking to the young pastor Timothy here. But it no less applies to the manner in which we as Christians ought to take special heed of how we handle the word of God. This is *more* than simply reading and having daily devotions out of someone else's one page devotional work. That is why those one minute bible devotions are so popular today – because they do the work for you!

Oftentimes, a desire to prove yourself right in the Word of God, is what spawns a study of Scripture. You are challenged by someone, want to provide them with some truth, and so you go and make a study of their question. When was the last time you studied the Bible, not to just find out if what you thought was true, or to find a proof text for something, but rather to work through, say, the book of Proverbs in study, or Galatians? I don't want to discount the need to be forced by God into studying on a particular subject, but Christians should be so wrapped up and spiritually invigorated with God's Word that such study is *common*. If it was common for Adam and Eve, they might not have partaken of the forbidden fruit.

We must also guard about our nature to proof text on subjects. When we come to the Scripture we want to find things *which agree with us*. We go into the Word with presuppositions. What does that mean? We tend to go into the Scripture with preconceived notions about what we want it to say. We need to stop our emotional presuppositions because that

is the *number 1* cause of bad theology in the church today. It's the, "I've always learned it this way." It is the, "That's how I was brought up," dilemma. Just because it has been taught to you, doesn't make it true. Just because it was preached to you by someone you admire, doesn't make it true. If that were the case, then all the cults all over the world, all through history, could be right simply because the cult leaders preached to people who liked what they were saying! You must be able to prove it from the Word with more than just a simple reading of the Word, or using the excuse, "My pastor said it so it must be true." In practicality on that issue, couldn't *Adam* have stepped in a corrected his wife's poor theology? Yes, he could have.

When we change the Word we are in contempt of Christ himself, for Jesus is the Word. John 1:1 says, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God..." Jesus *is* the living breathing Word of God. When you change the Word you change your conception of who God is. The whole of your Christian life is to know the Savior Jesus. How can you know Him unless you know what His word says? And what if you change the word? Then you are not truly believing in the true Christ. You have made up a *new* one, a new Jesus, whether on purpose, (because you do not like what the Word says), or on accident, (because you have not studied the word to know what it really says). Do you see the immediate danger there? If you are wrong about the Word, you may be believing in a Jesus who does not exist! You are believing in a different God – one you made up through false ideas. "Did God really say…?" Take the Word for what it says – not what you *think* it says. The new command Eve made up was just that – a *new* command. The new Jesus you make up is just that – a new Jesus who is not the Jesus of the Bible. He will be an idol; your own created lie. Again, God never gives us the right to be wrong about the Word because the Word is His Son, and He wants us to know His Son, in Spirit and truth.

The sin of pride, (which is self–love), is the great sin of the fall, and of men, and all temptation. It is pride that dissuades us from holding up the integrity of the Word of God. Self–love is at the *heart* of all sins. Hosea 5:5 says, "The pride of Israel testifies to his face; Therefore Israel and Ephraim stumble in their iniquity; Judah also stumbles with them." It

is the great duty of all believers *not* to enter into temptation, and *not* to give in to self–love. Know that God is indeed able to, "…deliver the godly out of temptations," (2 Peter 2:9). Yet it is our great task to use all diligence so that we do not fall *into* temptation. Christ expresses His concern for us by teaching us to pray, "Lead us not into temptation," (Matt 6:13). Since our Lord knows the power of temptation, having experienced it, He knows how vulnerable we are to it, (Heb. 2:18). He rewards our obedience by keeping us, "in the hour of temptation," (Rev 3:10). But this will only occur if we overcome the sin of self–love. Self–love is a man's love to his own good.

Moses wrote Genesis in need of explaining what the Israelites needed to know to make it from the wilderness into the *Promised Land*. How will they react to receiving the Law, and what will they do with the Law? It is found that on page after page that the Israelites never seem to learn how to reject wicked pride in desiring what *they* want, over following the commands of what God commands. Do you do the same?

Self–Love replaces love to God's Word and will. Pride, selfish desires, (pride coupled in ignorance), yields a mountain of self–deceit. We nod our heads at Eve's sin and say, *See, she sinned because of her self–love, her twisting the Word, and her sinful desires relying on her own imaginations, instead of the truth of God*. And at the same time that we nod at *her* self–love, and *her* pride which sparked the fall through *Adam's* wickedness, *we* are not as aware of the Word of God as we ought. Take a moment to prove that out. You condemn Eve quickly enough for not knowing God's word rightly, but then, I'll ask you Christian, *define justification through faith in Christ*, without which one cannot be saved! Can you do it? Can you describe, even simply, the doctrine of the *Trinity*? Again, without which one cannot be saved? What do you know about the Jesus of the Bible? There are many false Christ's out there in the modern church today. They offer everything under the sun at the expense of salvation. Can you determine what is right and what is wrong? Can you speak intelligibly about the Holy Spirit, the author of your regenerated heart? How are we any more ready to fight the serpent in our day than Eve was in hers?

We know God by His Word and by trusting in His Word. How can we worship a God we don't know? How can we pray to a God we don't know? How can we love a God we don't know? How can we do anything *spiritually* beneficial unless we know the Word of God in the way God gave it to us?

CHAPTER 14:
THE TEMPTATION PART 2

“And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, the woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the LORD God said unto the woman, what is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. And Adam called his wife’s name Eve; because she was the mother of all living. Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them. And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a

flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life," (Gen. 3:8–24).

The second part of Genesis 3 demonstrates the *effects* of sin on the human race. Where Adam and Eve had life, they now will have death. Where they had pleasure, they now will have pain and misery. Where they had abundance, now they will have a meager sustenance by working the ground by the sweat of their brow. Where they had perfect harmony with God and with each other, now they will have alienation and conflict.

We find here three sections: a) The confrontation by the Lord, in which the sinners, hearing him, fear and hide in the midst of the garden. b) The Word of the Lord, in which the new order is declared for the serpent, the woman, and the man. c) The provision of clothing and sacrifice from the Lord, in which the human attempt to cover guilt is superseded by the Lord. All of it is a demonstration of how paradise is *lost*, and a new worldview is set in place.

God calls sinners to confess their sin, not to attempt to excuse themselves, (verses 8–13). Sinners, aware of their sin, run from God because of the fear of judgment, (verse 8). Genesis 3:8 says, "And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden." Adam would normally have had communion with God at this time, but in this instance the narrative demonstrates that something is *terribly wrong*. Immediately, God inquires as to their presence to draw out of them a confession. He interrogates Adam and Eve as *sinners* who are hiding from His pure gaze. After they sinned, they sensed the holy presence of God which now felt different in their sinful state, and they *hid* themselves. We often hear of people who say they, "experience," God as a bright light or warm feeling, something that draws them *in*. In contrast, *every* biblical experience of *every* individual who comes into God's presence, shudders, bows, weeps, pronounces a curse on themselves, *etc*. They are *not* warmed with comfort. They are stricken with terror and shame.

Sinners, confronted by God's penetrating Word, must confess their sin and not excuse themselves, (verses 9–13). Genesis 3:9–13 says, "Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are you?" 10 So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself." 11 And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?" 12 Then the man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate." 13 And the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." In this section the student must look very closely at the Hebrew words and word order to catch the emphases in the dialogue.

The man's confession is seen in verses 9–12. "Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are you?" 10 So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself." 11 And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?" 12 Then the man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate." There are two sets of questions for Adam. First, there is the rhetorical question, "Where are you?" (That God said it to the man and that the answer is not literal but explanatory indicating it is rhetorical.) Adam's answer centers on his fear because he was naked. Nakedness in this way demonstrates shame and fear. This is the common reaction of sinners, now, through the rest of Scripture. Second, there is the interrogation about Adam's disobedience. The question was a reminder that *his* eating the forbidden fruit was a direct violation of the commandment. God is vindicated in His question demonstrating His sovereign power to command the creature. Here Adam should have confessed, but that confession was delayed when he *blamed* God, *and* his wife. Though his language focuses on the "woman," the clause still blames *God* for *providing* the woman. Amazing indeed. At the end of this, he finally says, "I ate."

The woman's confession is found in verse 13. "And the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." In speaking with Eve, God's

question is very forceful in the Hebrew, “Do you realize what you have done?” Unfortunately, even though she does not blame God, the woman also plays the blame game. She blames the serpent, but still says, with Adam, “I ate.”

In the dialogue the Lord shows His majesty and potency by asking penetrating questions, and these sinful humans appear fearful and defensive with evasive excuses. Eventually they did confess, and it was sufficient.

So, God declares the punishments for sin and the new worldview for sinners, (verses 14–19). The fall brought a perpetual struggle between good and evil, (verses 14–15). Genesis 3:14–15, “So the LORD God said to the serpent: “Because you have done this, You are cursed more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you shall go, And you shall eat dust All the days of your life. 15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.” The curse on the serpent demonstrates the first reality that something other than the snake itself is important in this deception. Yes, there is a curse on the animal, but verse 15 suggests that there is a *satanic force* behind the fall, and the reality, now, of a struggle that will ensue between *the woman* and the serpent. In the first part of the curse the focus seems to be on the animal used in the temptation. The basic idea of, “cursing,” here is the intrusion of sin, the intrusion of toil, and the intrusion of exclusion. “Curse” has the idea of banishment from the place of blessing. The serpent would now eat in the dust – the very opposite of the lush paradise. Its legs now succumbed to a slithering existence in the dust.

Then we come to an all–important biblical verse concerning *the new covenant*. Verse 15 is what we call in theology, the *Protoevangelium*, the, “before–Gospel.” It demonstrates the serpent’s curse in a perpetual conflict that will end with the seed of the woman delivering the crushing blow after receiving a crippling blow. The woman’s seed is the line of the Mediator to come, the genealogy of light, or of the living. The serpent’s seed is the line of the devil. There are *only* two lines. Jesus tells the Pharisees in John 8:44, “You are of your father the devil.” Conflict will

extend in genealogy between the chosen of God and the seed of the serpent. This struggle between good and evil would always be there in the human race, but ultimately the seed of the woman would bruise the head of the serpent's seed. This curse is something which does not grow into hostility but which is hostile from the beginning. God qualifies where this hostility is, "between the two seeds."

The importance of the seeds demonstrates the beginning of the New Covenant in Christ. It starts in Genesis 3:15, *not* in the book of Matthew. Yet, it extends through genealogies. Reading genealogies seems very dull. We often like to skip those parts in our devotional reading. What do you get out of reading a bunch of names? Are a bunch of names important? They are *very* important as God shows us in this passage. You want to *start* speaking about the Gospel? You begin doing that with *genealogies*. The word, "seed," refers to, "offspring." Genesis 3:15 speaks of two genealogical lines. The line of the serpent is the line of Satan. The line of the woman is the line of Christ. And the way this word is used shows us that the word can mean both *the line itself* and the *one* who epitomizes the line. This is qualified in the next part of the verse when it refers to the *One* who will crush the head of the serpent. You will not understand the concreteness of the promises of God or His *Covenant of Grace* if you do not understand that these two lines are *fixed*. They *never* change. In the ultimate sense there are no cross overs from the good line to the bad, or the bad line to the good. In God's plan there are two, and only two, lines of people; those of the kingdom of darkness and those of the kingdom of light. And we see this stretching all the way into the New Testament, and beyond, Acts 13:10 says, "You son of the devil..."

In God's plan of redemption there are two lines, the sheep and the goats, the saved and the lost, the wicked and the just, the wheat and the tares, the light and the darkness. "He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel." God says this Seed shall come and destroy the serpent, and his line. The head is the vital organ. Without a king, a kingdom will tumble and fall. Yet the serpent will not be crushed without a fight, for he will *strike* the coming One's heel. The best place for a serpent to bite you is in the back of the foot by the heel or as we would call it the Achilles' heel. If you have had, or have known what kind of pain is involved in an

injury to the Achilles heel, you would know that the serpent will have a well–planned and painful strike. Yet, “The God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly,” (Romans 16:20). This is not a *perhaps*, or a *probably;* this is the plan of God. *One* will come and crush the head of the serpent.

The fall brought the woman pain in childbirth and domination by her husband, (verse 16). In the oracle for the woman, one part deals with childbirth and the other with her relationship to the man. “Conception” *precisely* locates the pain she will bear. First, since there is no pain in conception, the word “conception,” means the whole process that begins with conception and moves through the emotional and physical toil of bearing children. The second part of the pronouncement is, “Your desire shall be for your husband.” The Hebrew word, “desire,” (*tesuqd*), is interpreted to describe, “prompting to evil”. This is important to understand. This word *desire* means to, “rule,” (*mdsal*). It is *punishment* for sin. This is not a good thing. To attempt to interpret it to teach the submission of the woman to her husband and the loving leadership of the husband to his wife *completely misses the point*. The curse lies in this, that the woman, fallen and depraved, would be as an archenemy *to the man*; and the man in his depraved fallen state would need to dominate the woman. Keep these in a biblical perspective. These roles are due to the fall and to the sinful estate they are in. Their roles have been tainted and they now work incorrectly on their own. The woman desires to rule the man, and the man, to usurp that rule, must dominate the woman by his authority. Later, Paul in Ephesians will show how that is carefully done in holiness through the union that husband and wife have in Jesus Christ.

The fall brought the man the prospect of painful toil until death, (verses 17–19). Genesis 3:17–19, “Then to Adam He said, “Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat of it’: “Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life. 18 Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, And you shall eat the herb of the field. 19 In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you are, And to dust you shall return.” Adam sinned willfully at his wife’s prompting and

brought sin into the human race by his act. His judgment is that as he ate, (as she did), he would experience painful toil *in eating*. The punishment on the ground would be a perpetual reminder of the fall, and of his sin. Such toil is indefinite. It would continue, literally, until *the death of his death*, when he returns to the dust. But interestingly enough, death, now, serves as a finality of the temporal curse. Toil continues until he dies, when something else will happen to him upon his death.

God then pronounces their *stupidity* in trying to be *like* God through *deceptive and disobedient means* when He majestically states, "Dust you are, and unto the dust you shall return." Calvin stated, "The oracles thus all reflect talionic justice: they sinned by eating, and so would suffer to eat; she led her husband to sin, and so would be mastered by him; they brought pain into the world by their disobedience, and so would have painful toil in their respective lives; and the serpent ruined the human race, and so he would be destroyed." We see that judgment is the inevitable consequence of disobedience.

God makes gracious provisions for believing sinners, (verses 20–24). Now that there will be a brand new worldview to deal with, misery, pain and toil, God extends His grace to His people. Faith overcomes the doom of the curse, (verse 20). Genesis 3:20 says, "And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living." Why is this verse here? In contrast to death now present because of Adam, Adam, by faith, names his wife demonstrating that he accepts the consequence of sin, but hopes in what God will do in the seed of the woman. In spite of the curse, her name, "life–giver," demonstrates that the woman herself became a pledge in the continuation and survival of the race, and the victory over death. Here, Adam is setting the standard for the new world order in God's grace.

Grace covers the sinners' shame, (verse 21). Genesis 3:21 says, "Also for Adam and his wife the LORD God made tunics of skin, and clothed them." Sacrifice and substitutionary atonement were set in place. Instead of killing Adam and Eve, God killed and sacrificed an animal in their stead and clothed them with their skins. Trees do not feel things, and Adam's covering of fig leaves, that would wither away, were insufficient

as a covering. In the Hebrew mind plants are not alive like an animal is alive. Sin cannot be atoned for by any some mechanical action (killing a bloodless plant), and it cannot be atoned for except by sacrifice. God alone can supply the necessary covering for them.

God prevents the extension of life by casting His people out of the garden, (verses 22–24). Genesis 3:22–24, "Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever" – 23 therefore the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. 24 So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life." God prevents Adam and Eve from extending their life in a fallen world. It is clear that whatever they had become was wicked and evil, God acted to prevent them from continuing on *perpetually* in that condition. He drove them out from the garden and stationed His angels and the flashing sword at the entrance of the garden. If he did not, they would have eaten of the immortal fruit of the tree of life, and would have lived perpetually in sin.

The doctrine from the text surrounds the fall and depravity of man. Sinful rebellion against God brings pain, conflict, and death. Life as it was for Israel, or as it is today, is not the way God created it. There was a break in the harmony from creation to the present condition. This passage explains why men and women labor in toil and agony and conflict all their days, and *why* they die. Sin has wrought this dilemma, and nothing short of the removal of sin will end it.

We need a definition of man's complete ruin. We call this *total depravity*. Total Depravity means that the natural man is never able to do any good that is fundamentally pleasing to God, and, in fact, does evil all the time. That definition is a positive statement. It is not a genitive statement. Listen to the 1647 *Westminster Confession of Faith* 6:2, "By this sin they fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body." Depravity is immediately seen in the passage in

Adam's hiding in fear, his shifting blame, his thought that fig leaves could cover his sin, and his thought that his sin could so *easily* be dealt with. If we define Total Depravity negatively, then we are pressed to say *Total Inability*. Men cannot do any good. The Synod of Dordt, against the Arminian pastors of the day, said that, "all men are incapable of saving good." They are following 1 Corinthians 12:3, "Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit." No one has the ability to truly say and mean that Christ is Lord except by the power of another – an alien power, the power of the Holy Spirit.

Fallen men do not understand that which is good. Acts 16:14 says, "Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul." Since men do not understand that which is good, the Lord must open their heart to receive the truth, without which, they do not receive it.

Men cannot desire to do good. This is a hard one for many people to accept. But Christ says in John 6:44, "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day." Men do not have the ability to come *unless* the Father draws, or more exegetically precise, "drag," them to Him (as the Greek word means).

Fallen men are *Dead Men Walking*. They are like the ever popular *zombie* craze of today. Colossians 2:13 says, "being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh." Ephesians 2:1,"who were dead in trespasses and sins…" Many deluded church goers believe men are sick in sin and not dead in sin. They think men are somewhat alive. They think that Adam, after the fall, could do some good things. But we do not find that in the text anywhere. We find him further aggravating his sin with lies, deception, self–love, pride and much more.

Does the bible prove out the fallen total depravity of every conceived person in history? Yes, quite extensively. Genesis 6:5 says, "Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Jeremiah 17:9 is explicit, "The heart is deceitful above all

things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?" David knew that even at the moment of conception he was conceived as a sinner, fallen in Adam as Psalm 51:5 states, "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me." Isaiah's book demonstrates depravity over and over. One classic verse is Isaiah 64:6, "But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; we all fade as a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."

What is the Lord's response to wickedness? In our text in Genesis 3 it is *judgment*. God is obliged to send Adam and Eve into everlasting torment prepared for the devil and his angels. That is what we call *justice*. Instead, we find justice *plus* grace. The Compassionate Judge of fallen men gives Adam and Eve justice, but also gives them grace through a divine provision. So we see in our text that the pattern of *substitutionary atonement* begins. The only satisfactory covering Adam and Eve would receive comes from God. It cannot be fabricated by human works – like sewing fig leaves to cover their nakedness. So, what must sinners do? They must confess their sin and trust in God's goodness for provision of life. What can sinners hope for? They can look forward to release from the curse and anticipate the ultimate victory over evil. So we find justice and mercy in this passage. But be aware, mercy is what God does when He wants to, not because He has to. And interestingly enough, He goes to great lengths to do it. Think it through, He gave Adam His Word to protect Him. He sacrificed two animals in place of Adam and Eve when He could have destroyed them when they ate the fruit. He sent them out of the garden so they would not live an extended life in sin. But most of all, God had already decided to send His only Son to die for that sin. And already (*in the Covenant of Redemption*) the Son had agreed to selflessly be bitten by the serpent that He may purchase the chosen line of the woman for God and His glory in the *Covenant of Redemption*.

From this passage we see some very important applications to us of the text. Sin is part of the plan of God. The Fall was not only *not* a surprise for God, but *planned* by God. Before the worlds were formed, God entered into an eternal covenant, (Father, Son and Holy Spirit), to create, allow the fall, and then redeem some men from that fall demonstrating all the attributes and characteristics that grace would allow. You see, there

was no grace in the primeval garden sanctuary. The Garden of Eden was set by *Law*, and Adam was to reflect that Law in obedience. In this, he would be like God. The temptation, though, shifted that focus to his own desires to achieve godlike reflection, and broke the *Covenant of Works* upon *one* sin. One sin was all it took. God graciously dealt with His fallen creation according to the standards of His holiness by instituting the *Covenant of Grace* in sending the One who would crush the head of the serpent. Sin is an integral part of God's plan in his covenant, though sin is wicked and evil. It is not some Oriental mysticism that says there is Yin and Yang, good and evil, that struggle against one another. There is a struggle for Christians, for you and I, but not for God, for God's ultimate good shall triumph in Jesus Christ. In the end, death and the devil will be thrown into the fiery lake of burning sulfur.

God not only allows sin, but He plans it. He uses it for His glory and His purposes. Genesis 50:20 is telling in this regard, "But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive." Or even more basically, Genesis 3:15 says, "And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel." It's God's plan, and was always His plan to bring forth His Son.

For believers in Jesus Christ, life in the Spirit removes the sting of the curse. God's gracious provisions are only found in Jesus Christ, the seed of the woman. But for the believer, the Christian, there are better prospects. The sting of the curse has been removed in view of the glorious prospects that lie ahead. There is no going back to the garden; the only way now is on to glory to join the last Adam, who died as the curse for the human race and changed death into life through his resurrection from the dead.

As a result of the curse, the Christian life will be hard. But a hard life for the Christian is overflowing with grace. Though God will send us afflicting providences, He will also send us comforting grace. The sinful worshiper, (Adam), lived on because of God's gracious institution of atonement. The human race lives on in the present evil world, yet the curse

remains in effect. It's all around us and is unmistakable. Read the *obituaries* in your local newspaper and see its affects. Stop taking the pain reliever for your ailments and you'll feel the affect. Look at your body, in all its problems, (overweight, old, tired, diseased, aging), and you see the curse. In this life, the curse is a vivid reality. People try to cover that reality up by engaging themselves with things that cause them to be distracted. Take a moment and go walk through your local mall. Watch the mallrats there. The mall is all they have. They are buying things and wasting time there day after day trying to make life *bearable*. What they do not know as they walk around like zombies is that life is *not* bearable. Sinful men and women cannot make life bearable. Only those in Christ can escape the sting of the curse. They do this in life by walking in the Spirit under the guise of the One who crushes the serpent. They even do this in death as 1 Corinthians 15:55 says, "O Death, where is your sting?" Death has no sting over those who are in Christ and in the line of the woman.

As a result of the fall, God never promises life will be easy. You hear these moronic preachers on TV tell you that life is easy in Christ. You can be rich and wealthy and have golden garbage cans or 65 million dollar jets. Just have a positive outlook on life. God wants you to be happy. Just be a Christian and once you are saved all your problems will go away. Those are not preachers. Those are demonic deceptions. They fill the pews, but they do not fill the regenerate heart. They are not pastors, but *church speakers* that need a biblical reality check. Christians who say that need to relearn their bibles. John 16:33 says, "In the world you will have tribulation;" write that one down in your little book of God's promises. Yet, couple that with the rest of what Christ says there, "…but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." We must have faith in the One who overcomes the serpent and restores paradise. Such a shift in our mind will yield much towards our sanctification, our preparation for the new world in which we await the restoration of all things.

CHAPTER 15:
CAIN AND ABEL

“And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD. 2 And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. 3 And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. 4 And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: 5 But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. 6 And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? 7 If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him. 8 And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him. 9 And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother’s keeper? 10 And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother’s blood crieth unto me from the ground. 11 And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother’s blood from thy hand; 12 When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth. 13 And Cain said unto the LORD, My punishment is greater than I can bear. 14 Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me. 15 And the LORD said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the LORD set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him. 16 And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden.” (Genesis 4:1–16).

The main idea of Genesis 4 demonstrates the spread of sin from the *family* to *society*. Concerning the historical narrative, we are only

given information concerning the immediate family of Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel. Sin was found in the garden through Eve's deception and Adam's covenant breaking. The next event is an exhibition that sin is indeed *infectious*.

In the development of the narrative we find Cain's birth, then Abel's birth. We see Abel's occupation, and then Cain's occupation. We see Cain's offering, and then Abel's offering. Then Abel's acceptance, and Cain's rejection. Finally, we are shown the conclusion in Cain's anger, and Abel's death. The narrative is an explanation of *hostile unbelief*. In Cain is the *epitome* of hostile unbelief.

What is *unbelief*? In the narrative, unbelief is opposition to God's will, and becomes anger over God's approval of those who are more faithful, (verses 1–5). This section demonstrates the *occasion* for the crime. One brother pleased God and found acceptance; but the other brother, thinking *himself* to be just as acceptable, was filled with envy and rage when we was turned away. Unrighteous men, if they believe themselves to be self–righteous, will always fall into jealousy and anger against the people of God.

Consider the birth of the children (verses 1–2). Genesis 4:1–2, "Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, "I have acquired a man from the LORD." Then she bore again, this time his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground." Throughout Scripture the idea of *knowing* is found both in the Old Testament and the New Testament. "Knowing" takes on a number of forms, including to be "known" and to be "foreknown." It is not simply the idea of *knowledge*, as we have discussed, as if having knowledge is what created the children. The text tells us that Adam *knew* his wife Eve and they had children. *Knowing* Eve is not just *knowing about her*. It is the same Hebrew and Greek use found in such verses as Amos 3:2, and Romans 8:29 referring to an intimate relationship. "You only have I known of all the families of the earth." (Amos 3:2). Certainly God, "knew," more than just the Israelites. He knew them *intimately*. "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren."

(Rom. 8:29). To, “foreknow,” or to, “know beforehand,” is again, the idea of intimacy. It is not a mere head knowledge. It is a heart union and intimate relationship between the two parties.

Eve gives birth to Cain, “I have acquired a male child from the Lord.” This is particularly important in that Eve thought this was, “the Seed,” promised just a few verses earlier. Eve was wasting no time. She was looking for the *immediate* fulfillment of God’s good *news promise* to them.

The child was named Cain, (*qayin*). The sentiment of Eve was an emotional explosion, “I have created (*qani’tf*) a man with the LORD.” Eve’s statement is *full* of hope and faith. She says, in effect, “God made man, and now with the help of the Lord, I have made the second man.” Cain, by virtue of being the firstborn, was considered a work of God. Keep in mind that Eve had no further revelation of her son until the act of his disobedience and apostasy. For all intents and purposes, she raised the child believing that this firstborn son *was* the seed of promise, though she continues bearing children and has Abel as well.[23]

We then find Scripture jumping years later to the work of the sons. Their occupations are very interesting, especially in the way Moses sets this up. Cain is a, “tiller of the ground,” but Abel is a, “keeper of the sheep.” While there is nothing wrong with either occupation (both were important in the church), there is a reference concerning each man in the order of nature. Cain’s work lines up with an occupation that resulted from the fall, (3:23), but Abel’s occupation stretches further back into the cultural mandate of man’s original purpose of having dominion over the animals in paradise, (1:28).

Next, we find the sacrifices which were both brought to God by the sons. We see the time of sacrifice and the obedience attempted by them, (3–5a), which sets up the pinnacle of the passage in the occasion of the murder. Genesis 4:3–5 says, “And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD. Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering, but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.”

What was Cain thinking? Let's explore this. At the time of worship, the *specific* God–appointed time of worship, which is the way the Hebrew expresses the idea, they offered sacrifices. There was, set by God, a specific time to bring a sacrifice and offer it before him. Both brought their offerings to God. Both offerings are first called *minhd*, which in the Levitical code describes as an acceptable offering. But, further, the Hebrew construction describing Abel's offering is elaborate. Moses seems to be making it clear that Abel went out of his way to please God, for, "He brought the fattest of the firstlings of his flock." Later, the Law of God required that worshipers were to give the best that they had to God, which included the firstborn of the flock that was the fattest or healthiest (*e.g*., Exod. 13:2, 12; see also Lev. 22:17–25). In contrast to Abel's offering, Cain's is simply *mentioned*. What a terrible feeling it is to hostile unbelief to be unrecognized in a duty that such a person thinks is fitting. He brought an offering of the fruit of the ground, as part of his *duty*. But Cain had an attitude problem. There was something wrong with Cain's *attitude* and *motivation*, and God rebukes him for it, "And the LORD respected Abel and his offering, but he did not respect Cain and his offering." The text does not specifically mention *how* Abel's sacrifice was respected by God, or what happened to show them that God respected one and not the other. We can give some conjecture and muse that maybe fire came down and consumed Abel's offering but not Cain's. Maybe God simply *spoke* to them and told Abel that his offering was acceptable. However God decided to show that to the two sons, it was *clear* that God respected one and not the other.

Hostile unbelief cannot but have a wicked response to such events, (5b). Genesis 4:5 says, "And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell." Cain's lack of belief in God's Word was demonstrated in his jealousy over his brother's acceptance. Keep in mind, reader, that this is the first recorded sin after the fall: *coveting*. Cain's unbelief disregarded God's commands, (verses 6–8). And so, in not offering whatever Cain was supposed to offer, and reacting with anger and jealousy from coveting Abel's position, God speaks with him. Actually, God first *interrogates* Cain and then gives him some needful instruction. Genesis 4:6–8, "So the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has

your countenance fallen? “If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it.” Now Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.” Cain was angry that *Abel* was accepted. The shift was from an offering to a status of acceptance of the person. “Will you not be accepted…” God says to him. And the root problem is mastery over sinful desires. God was instructing him, *Do what is right and you will master sin*. God was commanding Cain to act righteously. God does not stop commanding men to be righteous, even though they are now fallen. He still requires them to be righteous, even though they cannot be righteous without the blood of Christ and power of the Holy Spirit. He instructs Cain that sin lies at the door, just like the serpent that *barred* the way to paradise. Sin must be *mastered*. Cain must become a warrior and soldier for righteousness. All this was a reminder, a lesson about the fall – that sin is like an animal ready to pounce (like the serpent) and that Cain must have mastery over sin (like the woman’s curse having desire over her husband).

In verse 8 Cain demonstrates his *seared* conscience. This was not something new. It was the root of bitterness in his soul. And to think that Eve believed Cain to be the “Seed”! God *warned* him to master his sin, and instead, he unfolded a plan to murder his brother. This parallels the same instances of the garden – the speech, the circumstance, and the sin. Cain will repeat this in his murderous act.

Hostile unbelief always hates the Law of God, (verse 9). Talk to anyone on the street while witnessing and you will find hostility toward being, “told what to do.” Men in their depravity hate being told how to live. In Genesis 4:9 the LORD said to Cain, “Where is Abel your brother?” He said, “I do not know. Am I my brother’s keeper?” Does God know where Abel is? Yes. Does he ask the question *still*? Yes, it makes the event that much more serious for Cain. Cain denies the question. He should have said, “yes.” Cain was supposed to be his brother’s keeper, not his brother’s killer.

God does not allow Cain to respond to his rhetorical questions and subsequent statement. Cain's unbelief, though, rails against the punishment given by God, (verses 10–14). Genesis 4:10–14 says, "And He said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground. "So now you are cursed from the earth, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. "When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you. A fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth." And Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is greater than I can bear! "Surely You have driven me out this day from the face of the ground; I shall be hidden from Your face; I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth, and it will happen that anyone who finds me will kill me." The blood of Abel testified of Cain's actions. Cain cannot hide what he had done, no more than fig leaves could hide the fall. Abel's blood cries out. The Lord's speech then moves *instantly* from accusation to judgment, as if the insolent answer that Cain had given indicated there would be no confession forthcoming. Following the curse God gives him, Cain will also have a hard time living life itself, having taken life itself from his brother.

Blood soaked the ground, and so God cursed the ground *again* for Cain. The abundant fertility will in this way be greatly hindered, and Cain will have great difficulty *scratching* out his food. Cain will be a ceaseless, "wandering fugitive"; the murderer is banished from the fertile land and must flee into exile to the east.

It does not stop there. Cain offers a *rebellious* protest, (13–14). His response is not, "O forgive me…" No, it is selfish, "My punishment is too great to bear." The punishment is a lamentable state worse than death. It is unbearable, for, as Cain explains, to be driven away meant that he had to sever all relationships with the family and, more important, with *the Lord of blessing*.

Consider the outcome that Cain's unbelief still continues under God's divine protection, (15–16). Genesis 4:15–16 says, "And the LORD said to him, "Therefore, whoever kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold." And the LORD set a mark on Cain, lest anyone finding him should kill him. Then Cain went out from the presence of the LORD

and dwelt in the land of Nod on the east of Eden." The Lord protected Cain so that he would survive and that his punishment would continue. There was no remorse. Cain still defied God and settled in the land of Nod building a city, (as the next section will show). There is an ironic word play on, "Nod," for this was the word used for, "fugitive."

The first doctrine that ought to jump off the page of Scripture here is that without *faith* it is impossible to please God. Those without faith are in *rebellion* against God. Even if they go to church and read their bibles, they are merely *outwardly* religious. Those who desire to worship God rightly in every area and action of their life, must have as their goal to have an interest in Jesus Christ and please God. Otherwise, sin will work its wicked ways into a life of unbelief if it is not cast out or mastered.

Envy and hatred will work their ruinous ways into the lives of everyone who is merely outward in their religiosity. What do classmates think of the child who is the only one getting an "A" over the others in the class? Classmates generally don't pat such children on the back and say *well done*. Instead, they become jealous and envious and hateful: *teacher's pet*. Anytime a person is filled with envy and anger over God's blessing on others, there will be disaster if that anger is allowed to run its course. Cain has become the abiding example of this pattern.

Secondly, we ought to always be thinking that Christians are to be *keepers* of their brethren. What does that mean? We are to love one another. The Apostle John focuses on the theme of, "love for the brethren," and even uses Cain as an example in 1 John 3:11–13, "For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, not as Cain, who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother…Do not marvel my brethren if the world hates you." In loving one another, we do the opposite of what Cain did in murdering his brother. If we are even mildly jealous or envious of our brethren, it is but the beginning of murder. We are to serve God in righteousness, not simply be outwardly religious.

Christians who follow Christ must expect that the wicked will oppose them in a host of subtle ways. The world, the flesh and the devil are at constant odds with those who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity. It will

not be uncommon for those who are outwardly righteous in their walk to be opposed by the *Cains* of the day.

The Christian must consider what it means to love the brethren selflessly. *Where is your brother*? Cain was to know *where* he was and *what* he was doing. Are *you* your brother's keeper? Are you aware of the *wheres* and *whats* of your brother? Ask yourself, *Am I my brother's keeper? Am I his protector? Am I to exercise care over that person? Am I to treat him as if I was to care for my own property?* God's Scriptural answer for you in that is *Yes*! Do everything you can to selflessly love your fellow Christian. Cain asked the question, "*Am* [*my emphasis*] I my brother's keeper?" which he was supposed to fulfill making this all the more ironic for him.

Consider, there is a murderer loose in your church, have you heard the news? The murderer sits in your congregation each Sunday. Yes, reader, I mean it. Just the other day this person murdered someone in your church. This person didn't think that anyone saw him do it, but he was wrong. I have a written statement from eyewitnesses concerning your church that I am going to quote to you. Here is what it says, "Everybody who hates his brother is a murderer," (1 John 3:15). The last Sunday you sat in church, you sat next to a murderer. Why? Everyone you sit next to does not love his brother as they ought. And this makes Christians to follow headlong into the same sin of Cain.

What an awful thing Cain did. He hated and murdered his brother. But how much different are we all? Do we love our brothers and sisters in a way which always glorifies God? Do *they* know it? Do *you* know it? Christ Jesus tells us in Matthew 5:21–26 that being *angry* with your brother, saying *stupid*, or *fool* to our brother is just as bad as murder. We look to Cain and cringe at the sin which overwhelmed him. His sinful desires enticed him to commit a heinous crime, but don't ever disassociate yourself with Cain and his action. For we know that in some way and for some reason we are often incensed, bothered, angered, embittered, upset, agitated, and disturbed towards our brothers and sisters. We are all murderers. You may object and say, "But we don't kill people!" No, we may not outwardly kill them, as Cain *acted* on his sinful *desire*. But God

says that we are to be our brother's keeper, and if we are not, then that is the same as murdering them, spiritually speaking. Yes, greater sin (like murder) deserves greater punishment, but God is holy. Sin is sin to Him even if it is simply in your thoughts.

When you are mad at your spouse, when you yell at the kids, when you have a hostile and heated disagreement with a friend, consider yourself a *murderer*. We are to be the *protector* of our brothers and sisters. You are to be your brother's keeper. Each day we should ask ourselves, how can I bless my brother or sister today? How can I bless my wife, my husband, my children, my brother, my sister, my friend? How *can* I be my brother's keeper? Will you pray that God will aid you to find out what it means to be a keeper of the brethren daily? Most of the time people run so fast out of church that they can't get to know their brother or sister much less help them or care for them or be their friend in some way. We are so individualistic, we revamp the three musketeer's cliché saying, "All for one and one for all," to, "all for one and all for one," or even maybe, "all for one and one for all *only when I deem it convenient*." Or, "all for one and one for all if *he's already done something good for me*." Their blood, the emotional and physical blood, cries out to God.

Jesus' blood cries out much like that of Abel's but for a different reason. Christ's blood, "speaks more graciously than the blood of Abel," (Heb. 12:24). One theologian said of this, "Thus the Bible speaks of two kinds of blood and their voices before God: one of these is millionfold, and its message is accusation, while the other is the blood of the One, and it brings healing." Christ died willingly for his people, and was raised from the dead to intercede for them. He cares for us. Matthew Henry keenly stated, "Abel's blood cried for vengeance, Christ's blood cries for pardon." Jesus came to care for His sheep. He came to wash the disciple's feet. He comes to die for His friends. The Gospel of Mark says, "The Son of man did not come to be served but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many." Take a lesson from this reader. Be a servant, be the *least*, be your brother's *aid*, his *keeper*; not his murderer. When you want to be incensed with your brother, and you lack forgiveness in your heart, decide who you would rather be like: Cain or Christ, because you will either be like one or the other. There is no middle ground. In unforgiveness, hatred,

pride and envy Cain murdered his brother. And all of us are completely capable of each one of those emotions and actions.

In complete forgiveness and unwavering devotion and love, Jesus died for His friends. Christ, through His voluntary death, makes it possible for us to be our brother's keeper. And each one of us, aided by the Holy Spirit, can be capable of each one of *those* emotions and actions found in Jesus Christ. Otherwise, we would be determined to destroy our brothers for our own self–righteous goals. Who do you want to be like? Who *are* you like?

CHAPTER 16:
LAMECH AND CIVILIZATION

“And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Enoch: and he builded a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch. 18 And unto Enoch was born Irad: and Irad begat Mehujael: and Mehujael begat Methusael: and Methusael begat Lamech. 19 And Lamech took unto him two wives: the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah. 20 And Adah bare Jabal: he was the father of such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle. 21 And his brother’s name was Jubal: he was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ. 22 And Zillah, she also bare Tubalcain, an instructer of every artificer in brass and iron: and the sister of Tubalcain was Naamah. 23 And Lamech said unto his wives, Adah and Zillah, Hear my voice; ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech: for I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt. 24 If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold. 25 And Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth: For God, said she, hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew. 26 And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the LORD.” (Genesis 4:17–26).

Where men ought to be turning to the Lord, and following steadfastly after His immeasurable grace, we find a godless society. Men turned to the evolution of the arts and industry, rather than to the humility of following God. These men were a godless society and forgot what God has done. Marriage is even corrupted here and the first bigamist is demonstrated. The value of life was becoming valueless in a *short* time period. God desires His people to value human life and protect it in the bounds of marriage. And the retention of the knowledge of God was the most important aspect of life for the righteous. But we do not find that in this passage. Though society may seem to be growing, it is degenerating into a cesspool of filth. Here we find the continuation of Cain’s family and industry, (verse 17–22).

The family of Cain altered the institutions of God and disdained the value of life but at the same time produced cities, music, and all types of implements for the *good* life. The world *prides* itself on such cultural advancements. Billions, if not trillions of dollars are spent toward American entertainment. Everywhere you turn in America we are amusing ourselves to death.

Cain fathered Enoch, after whom he named a city and through whom the line developed to Lamech, (verses 17–18). Genesis 4:17, "And Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch. And he built a city, and called the name of the city after the name of his son – Enoch." Cain *knew* his wife and fathered Enoch (verse 17a). Remember, Genesis is filled with the genealogical lines. Cain built a city and named it after his son as a memorial to him. He did *not* name it after God. Why would he? He is a God–hater. Instead, he names it after his own son made in his own image – fallen and depraved. Personal glory and self–righteousness is at the heart of all fallen industry. Cain must be proud, for his city becomes a lasting monument (verse 17). Cain's city and it being named after his firstborn, demonstrates his desire to build an *earthly* kingdom for himself. Since he was kicked out of God's kingdom, he desires his own kingdom, and creates a family of the ungodly. Every world system and industry that copies his work is demonstrating a *desire* to reject God and build an ungodly family. Keep in mind, though, the building of *the city* is a rebellious act by Cain, for he was condemned to be a ceaseless *wanderer* in the earth, not the mayor of a depraved town. Even in his curse he rebels.

Then, we see that Enoch continued the line of descendants toward Lamech, (verse 18). Lamech, through two wives fathered those who produced all kinds of implements for the enjoyment and convenience of a godless life, (verses 19–22). Genesis 4:19–22, "Then Lamech took for himself two wives: the name of one was Adah, and the name of the second was Zillah. And Adah bore Jabal. He was the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock. His brother's name was Jubal. He was the father of all those who play the harp and flute. And as for Zillah, she also bore Tubal–Cain, an instructor of every craftsman in bronze and iron. And the sister of Tubal–Cain was Naamah." Altering God's institution of marriage, Lamech took *two* wives and fathered those who produced cultural arts and

industry, (verses 19–22). Industry was given prominence among this line. We find the food industry, arts and entertainment, and even architecture. Men's achievements, without any mention of God's work, are given preeminence. The society described here is a society rejecting God, as the preceding section of the chapter so vividly concluded. The narrative demonstrates that the family of the fugitive and wanderer attempts to evade the curse of God by his rebellious ingenuity. Their prosperity is notable, but it is an empty prosperity apart from God.

Then we find Lamech's song, (verse 23–24), exulted over *killing* a youth. What kind of *moral* people are these *industrious* people? We already have seen the blatant disregard for Gods Law in marriage through bigamy, and then a blatant disregard for His work in men and their talents in industry. Now Lamech is going to be like dear old dad. But he is a step further in aggravating his sin. He is *boastful* in it. Lamech's boast is found in Genesis 4:23–24, "Then Lamech said to his wives: "Adah and Zillah, hear my voice; Wives of Lamech, listen to my speech! For I have killed a man for wounding me, Even a young man for hurting me. If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, then Lamech seventy–sevenfold." At the heart of this narrative about the advances in civilization is additional information about *advancing rebellion* against God.

First there was bigamy, a problem that society would face for ages to come. Malachi, though, reminded the people of his age that God originally made man and woman as one, so that there might be a godly seed, (2:1). The prophet's message was based on Genesis and was a warning for the people to put away their foreign wives. Ezra had done the same.

Second, there was disdain for the value of human life. One theologian said it was, "a demonstration of strength for the benefit of the worm." Five generations after Cain there was a lack of discipline in the family to such an extent that the sanctity of the family is disregarded. Lamech killed a young man who had offended him. Killing, the first sin committed outside the garden as a result of covetousness, was here to stay. After taking vengeance on the young man, a lad, Lamech demanded greater leniency with vengeance that might come his way than that which

was afforded to Cain. Lamech's use of the Hebrew word, "killed," is the same word used in the account of Cain's murder, and provides the link between the two crimes. But Lamech *exploited* the divine provision by expecting to be avenged seventy times seven. Jesus paralleled this passage when he said that the way of the righteous would be to *forgive* seventy times seven, (Matt. 18:22).

Lamech believes God will protect *his* life as well, and protect it *better* than Cain because Lamech believes he is a far better person than Cain was. Cain killed *his brother*, Lamech just killed *some other person*. He's thinking, God must protect me *more* since my crime is not as bad as my father's. In this he is slighting God's divine decree and believing in *false security*. It is as if Lamech was saying, "Don't worry my wives, I will not be punished, I am not as bad as Cain, for I have killed a man justly because he harmed me first, Cain slew his own brother out of hatred and malice for no good reason. And if God protected him for that how much more shall he protect me?" Man's total depravity comes to the forefront, *again*. Like father, like son.

Next, we find Seth's family and the knowledge of the Lord outlined in verses 25–26. The seventh from Adam through the lineage of Seth was *Enoch*, who walked with God and did not die (Gen. 5:24). This line is far different from Cain's. The seventh from Adam through Cain (and perhaps contemporary with Enoch) was Lamech, who boasted of killing a young man. In the two lists, speeches are attributed to only two of the people listed—the two Lamechs. Lamech the descendent of Adam of Cain sang a taunt song of his prowess in killing the youth warrior. But Lamech the descendant of *Seth* named his son *Noah* in that he would bring people comfort from the pain of the curse.

We then find Eve coming back to some slower reality of the seed of the woman and her line. She had been disillusioned with the birth of the murderous Cain. Now she bears another through God's provision. There is no mention of promise and fulfillment here from Eve. She is much slower in her speech and thoughts than before, but more direct on the depravity of the situation. Yet, she is a woman of faith. Genesis 4:25 says, "And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and named him Seth, "For God has

appointed another seed for me instead of Abel, whom Cain killed." Eve again displayed her faith with the expression of the sentiment over her son, whom she named Seth, "For God has appointed me *another* seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew." The motivation for the name is at one time a poignant reminder of the murder and a hopeful anticipation of things to come. The name *Seth* may mean, "new beginning," or "foundation." On this child their hopes were renewed. With this child they once again enjoyed God's provision.

We then hear the faithful proclamation of God's name (verse 26). Seth was the father of Enosh, and a new beginning occurs, Genesis 4:26, "And as for Seth, to him also a son was born; and he named him Enosh. Then men began to call on the name of the LORD." The faith of Seth is strong, for people began, "to call on the name of the LORD." This expression demonstrates a *proclamation*. Throughout the Pentateuch the idea of proclamation is more than simply praying (*cf*. Gen. 12:8; Exod. 34:6; Lev. 1:1). The meaning of *sem*, "name," also requires interpretation, since the word is actually followed by the name itself. The idea of this line is that people began to make proclamations about the nature of the Lord. To call upon the name of *Yahweh* is to make an exclamation of proclamation about Him. This is the oldest reference to the expressive worship of Yahweh we have. It shows that the name *Yahweh* was known by God's people from earliest times.

The text is filled with the notion of false security. It is the first doctrine to be considered in this passage. The two lines are again manifested – and throughout the Bible we see them. The line of the serpent and of the woman are seen in both Lamech and Seth. One line leads to destruction and the other to eternal life. One line boasts in its sin and the other turns to God because of their sin. One turns to industry and arts and entertainment, and the other calls on the name of the Lord.

Depravity and sin get worse, not better, with time. We may think for a moment that Lamech is not as bad as his father Cain. Cain killed his brother for no good reason but hatred. Lamech killed the young man because he had first been wounded. Wasn't Lamech just in his actions? An eye for an eye? No. We find that Lamech's depravity and sinfulness is

seventy–seven times worse than Cain's. Sin becomes more extreme. Lamech *boasted* in what he thought was poetic justice, but was a mere example of how sinful man had actually become. Sin never gets better but rather worse. 2 Thessalonians 2:3 says, "until the falling away comes first..." And 1 Timothy 4:1 says, "Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron..." Such a commentary sounds like Lamech.

If you read about the great theologians in church history, you will find that the older they got, the more they had an impending sense of their sin and depravity. The more they knew God the more they knew they were sinful and wicked in need of Christ's divine grace. When people see their need, they have an intense feeling of sinfulness. Peter says in Luke 5:8, "Depart from me for I am a sinful man Lord." Here we find Peter lamenting over his sin, just because Jesus *is standing next to him.*

Like Lamech, sinners often flatter themselves with the hope of impunity. If they realized it, they would be in terror of hell and judgment. Since they do not realize it, this demonstrates they have a false security about their hope. Some are so hopefully deceptive, that they think, generally, they are good people and so will escape any judgment. Jonathan Edwards called this self–deception a, "vain self–flattery," in many of his sermons.

The wicked will always *boast* in false security before God. False security tells a person they are safe and secure from all alarm, *i.e.* the wrath and judgment of God for sinners. This is like having a seat–belt on in a car which is going to explode the moment you turn on the ignition. It deceives them in that they can rest easy in their sin. It deceives them in that they do not need to show forth fruit. They think, "No matter what I do God will protect me in it." People think they are *safe* in their sin.

False Security stems from a variety of instances, but mostly from the sin of ignorance and unbelief concerning God's Word. Repenting and turning from sin is far different then the unbiblical notion of simply praying a prayer and accepting Christ. We need to begin to revive the

terminology of the Bible and dispense with false notions which have commonly arisen in the church because of ignorance.

The second doctrine to consider is what kind of people make up the world system, and how do they stand in the sight of God? The world civilization stands in opposition to God at every turn. Remember, the narrative describes the first *fallen* society. Genealogically, societies that follow its morality and model will be further expressions of it. What was it like? Self–indulgent, self–gratifying, city–building, developers who boasted in their sin and turned their back on God. They did this without the Law of God, harnessed by unbelief.

In opposition to this, God's people are a kingdom of *priests* being built into a spiritual temple. God desires His church to be a kingdom of priests, (Exod. 19:6 and 1 Peter 2:5), to worship the Lord and proclaim His name.

Personally apply this passage to your own life, in that, in a rebellious and self–indulgent society, the righteous must preserve the knowledge of the Lord. This is where all theology must rise and be proclaimed. The doctrine of God is the most important theological teaching and the first to be said to bring men back upon a right track. We call this *theology proper*. In systematic theology first we study how to think. If we cannot think, we cannot think rightly about God. Secondly, we learn where we are to get our thoughts, and that is from the Bible. Then the third area we study is the theology proper, theology about God. Christians must *preserve* God's knowledge, not simply theoretically, but practically. Christians must act opposite that of Lamech and his family. They must be centered on a proclamation about God, and a preservation of a sanctified life, bringing truth into every area of the cultural mandate. They are to invade industry, arts and entertainment, and architecture with the truth of a proclaimed Lord who rules over all with a morality found only in Scripture. Do you do that?

Do not think for a moment that Lamech's society is a thing of the past. Our society *today* is that of Lamech's; a society of false securities. In today's society it is much the same in that people do not have the fear of God before them. They think they do not need God or Christ because they

are successful. Success is not blessing. We hear people say in our own country, all the time, “God bless America.” Just listen to the lying politicians. What they *mean* is that as we have prospered so let us continue to prosper. They don’t care for an instant about God’s blessing. People say that as a form of false security because they think *prosperity* is a *sign* of blessing. But, God’s blessing may not be that kind of blessing. Proverbs 1:7 says, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction.” Do what you want, print *in God we trust* on the dollar bill, and everything will be all right. The bible has names for these kinds of people who hold to a false security: reprobate, apostate, wicked, evil, lost, and deceived.

Many so called Christians are this way as well. Professing Christian people believe in false security all the time. When you have a sense of false security, you can boast in your sin and never know it; not even feel bad in it. Do you think if Lamech knew he was going to burn in hell that he would have said such a thing to lead him there all the quicker, or to *heat hell hotter*? False security is when you think you will go to heaven, but you really don’t know for sure, but you live as if you are sure. False security allows you to sin and still think it’s okay to sin the way *you* do. People will say, “Well Jesus died for me because I walked the isle; I know I can ask forgiveness. I did this or I did that.” False security tells us it’s easier to ask for forgiveness than permission. Rather, opposite to this, Peter tells us to, “make your calling and election sure,” (2 Peter 1:10). False security rests satisfied in itself, but real Christians hunger and thirst after righteousness and desire the things of God. False security tells us to be satisfied in our Christian life as it stands now. That way there is never any need to risk feeling secure. That is why there is a difference between the world’s belief system, and the daily empowerment of calling on the name of God.

The sin of false security *can* be mortified. But first, those who hold to false security must know that it is just a nice way of saying *you’re lost and going to hell*. No professing Christian is exempt here from examining yourself to be sure your salvation is not *false*. Those who *call themselves* Christians must put themselves on trial to see whether or not they are convicted of acting, walking, talking and living as a Christian

should. Jesus says, “And why do you call me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?” (Luke 6:46). Do you love the brethren? Show forth the fruit of righteousness? Have an interest in knowing Christ more each day? Pray daily? Read Scripture daily? Study daily? Do you call Christ Lord and yet are deficient in the basics of the Christian life? Salvation towards good works is the only remedy for false security.

It doesn’t matter what *you’ve* done. Don’t ask what you’ve done for *yourself* at home or church; ask what are you doing for the *kingdom of God*. You cannot measure your spirituality solely by doing things that hypocrites do, or even demons. That makes this a question of the regenerated *heart*.

You can’t be a Christian and never change. 1 John 2:6 addresses that, “He who says he abides in Christ ought himself also to walk just as Jesus did.” Your heart will show you what your walk is like. Check your *heart*. It doesn’t matter if you say *Jesus died for me*, or, *I believe in His name*. Did you know that the demons have thorough biblical knowledge of God, and they *tremble* at the word of God? But demons are not converted.

False security is false *belief*. False security is equal to blind men who *think* they see. It’s like the story of the preacher, the pigs and the farmer. A downcast preacher looked out his window one day to see a farmer leading a group of pigs to the slaughter house. The pigs were following him *willingly*. The preacher ran outside and stopped the farmer and asked, “How are you getting the pigs to follow you so willingly? I preach the Gospel so that people will follow Christ, and yet, they reject him? Why are the pigs following you to the slaughter house?” the farmer answered, “I have some pig feed in my pocket, and every so often I toss a little out on the ground, and so, the pigs will follow me right into the slaughter house.” The people of the world are like pigs. They revel in false security thinking they are getting tidbits of food to eat, where all along the devil and his minions are leading them to the slaughter house of hell.

If you were to be examined by someone in your neighborhood, would *they* say you are a Christian? Can they say, “Look there goes a man, a woman, who overflows with the fruits of the Spirit, the fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, self–control,” and the

like? If you are comfortable in false security, then lie on the operating table of the Great Physician Jesus Christ, and have your heart worked on. He will use his surgical tools on you: three iron spikes, a crown of thorns, a cross, a large Roman spear, blood and water, an empty tomb, and a throne of grace.

The remedy for a society which acts like Lamech's is to, "Call upon the name of the Lord." Our society is filled with ideas of self–security. Every bookstore is filled with self–help books, even Christian bookstores. Self–help is the *theology of Lamech*.? The text is very specific – it is about the nature of God as a preserving agent. Lamech was just a few generations down the Cainite line and he had false misconceptions about what God was like. His conceptions fed world industry instead of the Christian soul.

Even today, Psychologists attribute so much of *sin* to the lowering of self–esteem – *that is why* you feel insecure and detached from God. Where do we ever find the Bible talking about bettering *your* self–esteem? I'll tell you where, "Adah and Zillah, hear my voice; wives of Lamech listen to my speech! For I have killed a man for wounding me, even a young man for hurting me. If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, then Lamech seventy–seven fold." There is no such thing as good self–esteem. Self–esteem is nothing more than the politically correct term for *sinful, boastful pride*. Instead, you need to be filled with God–esteem!

Lamech was an infidel. He was filled with doubt, error, and heresy, and ultimately apostasy. Infidelity, doubt, error, heresy and apostasy are opposed to faith. Infidelity is a dissent from the faith in a man who has not yet professed the true faith, (1 Cor. 14:22, 23). Doubt occurs in one who has made a profession but whose assent is now diminished or taken away. Doubt diminishes assent and coexists with a weak faith, (1 Cor. 8:10, 11). But doubt which takes away assent cannot, (James 1:6–8). Error in faith puts forth an opinion contrary to faith, (1 Cor. 15:46). Then heresy adds stubbornness to error, (Titus 3:10–11). Apostasy taken absolutely adds to heresy all the errors contrary to faith, (1 Tim. 1:19-20; 2 Tim. 1:15). This is the father of modern society. This is Lamech, and it is every unbeliever since his time.

We need to have *God–esteem,* which is where true security comes from. “It is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me,” (Gal. 2:20). “And men began to call upon the name of the Lord.” What did they call on? They called on *God*. They called on God’s *name*. His name is directly related to His person. Whatever the student of the Bible may know about God is what he may call God. Here are just a few names that Scripture *calls* God.

> Advocate (1 John 2:1), All, and in All (Col. 3:11), Almighty (Rev. 1:8), Altogether Lovely One (Song of Sol. 5:16), the Amen (Rev. 3:14), Anchor (Heb. 6:19), the Ancient of Days (Dan. 7:9–11 with Rev. 1:13–16), the Angel [of the Lord] (Gen. 16:9–14; Gen. 48:16), Anointed (Ps. 2:2), Apostle (Heb. 3:1), Arm of the Lord (Isa. 53:1), Alpha and Omega (Rev. 1:8; 21:6), Author (Heb. 12:2), Balm of Gilead (Jer. 8:22), Beginning (Col. 1:18), Begotten (John 3:16), Beloved (Eph. 1:6), Bishop of your souls (1 Pet. 2:25), Blessed and only Potentate (1 Tim. 6:15), Branch (Isa. 11:1; Jer. 23:5; Zech. 3:8; 6:12; Rev. 11:1), Bread (John 6:32–33; 6:35), Bridegroom (Matt. 9:15; John 3:29; Rev. 21:9), Bright and Morning Star, and Brightness of God’s glory (Heb. 1:3), Captain of salvation (Heb. 2:12; Josh. 5:4), Chief among ten thousand (Song of Sol. 5:10), Chosen of God (Luke 23:35), Christ (Matt. 1:17; Mark 8:29; John 1:41; Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 1:23), Comforter (Isa. 61:2; John 14:16), Commander (Isa. 55:4), Consolation of Israel (Luke 2:25), Corn of Wheat (John 12:24), Cornerstone (Eph. 2:20), Counsellor (Isa. 9:6; Isa. 40:13), Covert (Isa. 32:2), Creator of all things (Col. 1:16), Daysman (Job 9:33), Dayspring from on high (Luke

1:78), Day Star (2 Pet. 1:19), Deliverer (Rom. 11:26), Desire of all nations (Hag. 2:7), Door (John 10:7, 9), Emmanuel (Matt. 1:23; see also Isa. 7:14; 8:8), End, see Beginning and the End, End of the Law (Rom 10:4), Express image of His person (Heb. 1:3), Faithful Witness (Rev. 1:5; 3:14; 19:11), Faithful and True (Rev. 19:11), Father of Eternity (Isa. 9:6), Fellow of God (Zech. 13:7), First and the Last (Rev. 1:17), First begotten of the dead (Rev. 1:5), Firstborn or Firstfruits (1 Cor. 15:20, 23), Foundation (Isa. 28:16; 1 Cor. 3:11), Fountain (Jer. 2:13; Zech. 13:1), Forerunner (Heb. 6:20), Friend of sinners (Matt. 11:19; Luke 7:34), Fullness of the Godhead (Col. 2:9), Gift of God (John 4:10; 2 Cor. 9:15), Glory of God (Isa. 60:1), God (John 1:1; Matt. 1:23; Rom. 9:5; 1 Tim. 3:16; Heb. 1:8), Good Master (Matt. 19:16), Governor (Matt. 2:6), Great High Priest (Heb. 4:14), Guide (Psalm 48:14), Head (even Christ) (Eph. 4:15), Heir of all things (Heb. 1:2), Helper (Heb. 13:6), Hiding Place (Isa. 32:2), High Priest (Heb. 3:1; 7:1), Holy Child (Acts 4:30), Holy One (Acts 2:27; 3:14), Hope of Israel (Jer. 17:3), Horn of salvation (Psalm 18:2; Luke 1:69), I AM (John 8:24, 58), Image of the invisible God (2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:15), Intercessor (Heb. 7:25), Jehovah (Isa. 26:4; 40:3), Jesus (Matt. 1:21), Judge (Micah 5:1; Acts 10:42), Just One (Acts 7:52), King (Zech. 14:16), Kinsman (Ruth 2:14), Lamb of God (John 1:29, 36; 1 Pet 1:19; Rev. 5:6, 12; 7:17), Last, see First. (Rev. 22:13), Lawgiver (Isa. 33:22), Life (1 John 1:2), Light (John 12:35), Lion of the tribe of Judah (Rev. 5:5), Lord and Savior

(1 Cor. 12:3; 2 Pet. 1:11), Master (Matt. 8:19), Mediator (1 Tim. 2:5), Merciful High Priest (Heb. 2:17), Mercy Seat (Rom. 3:24–25), Messiah (Dan. 9:25; John 1:41; 4:25), Mighty God (Isa. 9:6; 63:1), Minister of the Sanctuary (Heb. 8:2), Nazarene (Mark 1:24), Nobleman (Luke 19:12), Offering (Eph. 5:2; Heb. 10:10), Offspring of David (Rev. 22:16), Ointment poured forth (Song of Sol. 1:3), Our Peace (Eph. 2:14), Physician (Matt. 9:12; Luke 4:23), Plant of Renown (Ezek. 34:29), Potentate, Blessed and only, (Acts 3:15; 5:31), Prophet (Acts 3:22–23), Propitiation (1 John 2:2; 4:10), Power of God (1 Cor. 1:24), Priest (Heb. 4:14), Quickening (life–giving) Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45), Rabbi (John 3:2; Matt. 26:25; John 20:16), Ransom (1 Tim. 2:6), Redeemer, Redemption (Isa. 59:20; 60:16; 1 Cor. 1:30), Refuge (Isa. 25:4), Resurrection and the Life (John 11:25), Righteousness (Jer. 23:6; 33:16; 1 Cor. 1:30), Rock (Deut. 32:15; 1 Cor. 10:4; Rom. 9:33; 1 Pet. 2:8), Rod (Isa. 11:1), Root (Rev. 22:16), Rose of Sharon (Song of Sol. 2:1), Sacrifice (Eph. 5:2), Sanctification (1 Cor. 1:30), Savior of the world (Luke 1:47; 2:11; 1 John 4:14), Seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:16, 19), Shepherd (1 Peter 5:4), Shiloh (Gen. 49:10), Sun of Righteousness (Mal. 4:2), Surety (Heb. 7:22), Teacher (Matt. 26:18; John 3:2; 11:28), Testator (Heb. 9:15–17), True Bread (John 14:6), Vine (John 15:1, 5), Way (John 14:6), Wisdom (1 Cor. 1:24, 30), Wonderful (Isa. 9:6), and the Word (John 1:1).

Just think, these names are a few found in Scripture. How many of them did you know? How could you use them to call on His *name?*

Calling on the name of the Lord is worship of God. Spiritual worship fuels faith. Such a faith will restore religion even in a degraded society. Calling upon the name of the Lord is the remedy for our fallen and wicked society. Listen to the *Westminster Shorter Catechism* question 7, "What is God? Answer: God is a Spirit, in and of himself infinite in being, glory, blessedness, and perfection; all–sufficient, eternal, unchangeable, incomprehensible, everywhere present, almighty, knowing all things, most wise, most holy, most just, most merciful and gracious, long–suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth." God's attributes correspond directly to His name. This is what faithful believers call upon when they call out to God, when they call on His name.

Natural worship directs itself towards God, either as our good or as good in Himself. The worship which directs itself toward God as our *good,* regards Him either as He is ours at present, in faith, or as He is to be ours, in hope. Faith is the virtue by which, clinging–to the faithfulness of God, we lean upon Him, so that we may obtain what He gives to us, (John 3:33). He who receives His testimony has sealed that God is true, (John 1:12), and as many as received Him believed in his name.

Five things belong together in divine faith: 1) a knowledge of what God testifies to; 2) a pious affection toward God which gives his testimony greatest force with us; 3) an assent given to the truth testified to, because of this affection toward God who is the witness of it; 4) a resting upon God for the receiving of what is given; and 5) the choosing or apprehension of what is made available to us in the testimony. Have you thought about your faith in this way?

The first of these is in the understanding. But it does not produce faith because it is common to us along with unbelievers, heretics, apostates, and the demons themselves. The nature of faith is excellently set forth in the Scriptures when the faithful are said, *to cleave to God*, (Josh. 23:6; Acts 11:23; 1 Cor. 6:17); *to choose the way of truth and to cleave to the testimony of God*, (Ps. 119:30-31). For by faith we first

cleave to God and then fasten on to those things which are made available by God. God Himself is, therefore, the first object of faith and what is made available by God is secondary. Faith is our life as it joins us to God. But it is also an act of life because it is a virtue and our duty towards God. Therefore, we define it as all that God sets forth for us to believe. Therefore, faith is not wholly concerned about God's threatenings in themselves, because they do not make available the good for us to receive; nor about God's commandments in themselves, because they declare the good to be done, not to be received; nor about mere predictions for in the strict sense they make no good available to us. But faith is rooted in the promises, because in them is set forth a good to be embraced. Therefore, theologians are accustomed to make the promises of God (His Word) the primary object of faith.

It seems, for example, that the entire religious system of Seth's day was a result from his family's commitment to the Word of God and the worship of God. And so there is a question as to which genealogical line we will follow – Lamech's with industry, or Seth's with right worship, and right doctrine. There is no doubt that we have received from the heathen a great many helpful things – much science, astronomy, music, culture, food, *etc*. But what do we rejoice in? What are we jubilant in? The godly line is the preservation of saving knowledge of the nature of God. Are you in the business of preserving God's saving knowledge in your family? Or are you more interested in Lamech's family, who built great houses, listened to great music, ate great food, and continued to entertain themselves to *eternal death*?

CHAPTER 17:
NOAH, HOPE, AND A COMFORTABLE WALKING WITH GOD

"This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him; 2 Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created. 3 And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth: 4 And the days of Adam after he had begotten Seth were eight hundred years: and he begat sons and daughters: 5 And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died. 6 And Seth lived an hundred and five years, and begat Enoch…[*read the entire narrative on your own*] 20 And all the days of Jared were nine hundred sixty and two years: and he died. 21 And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah: 22 And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: 23 And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years: 24 And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him….28 And Lamech lived an hundred eighty and two years, and begat a son: 29 And he called his name Noah, saying, This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the LORD hath cursed. 30 And Lamech lived after he begat Noah five hundred ninety and five years, and begat sons and daughters: 31 And all the days of Lamech were seven hundred seventy and seven years: and he died. 32 And Noah was five hundred years old: and Noah begat Shem, Ham, and Japheth." (Gen. 5:1–32).

Having such a long passage to explain, I exhort the reader to take some time and read through these verses in their copy of sacred Scripture. We find here, ten sections with three divisions. The ten sections show ten generations from Adam to Noah. And the prominent theme in these ten sections is that *they all died*. Death is reigning, instead of a desire to please the living God. Genesis 2:17 is echoed all through this chapter, and demonstrating the reality of God's promise. "In the day that you eat of it

you shall surely die." They *all* died after a time. The longest life was Methuselah's being 969 years old. In contrast to death and dying in this section, there is *walking* with God, or *living* to God.

The three divisions are as follows; man is still created in the image of God though it is fallen, for each of them live, but then *die*, as God stated, (verses 1–3). The second division is where the text says that Enoch *walked with God* and then was miraculously taken up by God, (verse 24). The third section deals with Noah. Noah was to bring relief in as shown in verse 28.

Dealing with the first division, we find the image and likeness of God in man corrupted, but men are still required by God to be holy. Though they are fallen, and cannot please God apart from His saving grace, God still requires men to walk before Him blamelessly – something they cannot fulfill. In Genesis 1:26 the order of the wording is first, "image" then "likeness." Genesis 1:26, "Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." In Genesis 5:1, it is just "likeness" as a *summation*. "This is the book of the genealogy of Adam. In the day that God created man, He made him in the likeness of God." In 5:3 the words are reversed, "likeness" then "image." "And Adam lived one hundred and thirty years, and begot a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth." This *likeness* was given *from* Adam *to* Seth, and so on. God did not recant His requirement for man though he fell. Man was to rule in righteousness and in a holy manner before God. But now, instead of being "like God" each of the generations are "like Adam." They cannot fulfill God's requirement. Instead, they live in sin and then die.

In the second division, Enoch walked with God and was taken up by God. We find here that there is hope under the curse. In all the other sections it states that man *lived and died*. In this section it is stated that Enoch lived and "walked with God." It states this twice in verses 22 and 24. Something here was *different*. Enoch had a relationship with God in such a way as to *never* taste death. This does not mean he was not a sinner

or a partaker of the curse. He was fallen in Adam. But he did something not mentioned as a point of importance in the other parts of the genealogical line. In contrast to the other genealogical cycles, Enoch did not "live," instead, *he walked with God*. Also, Enoch did not *die* – he *walked with God, and God took him.* Consider, reader, that Enoch's walk lasted for three hundred years. This is true fellowship with the Lord and quite different from merely living life.

In division 3 we find hope in Noah. Through Noah, somehow, the text directs us that there is relief from the curse. Lamech (the good one) states that Noah would bring *relief* from the evils of man. Lamech, like Eve, makes a mistake in thinking that *Noah* would *personally* bring relief. But his inclinations (his prophetic words) were on the right path. We see later that *temporary relief* is brought on by the flood. Ultimate relief is still waiting for God's Messiah to come.

The genealogy ends with a reference to Ham, Shem and Japheth. They are Noah's descendants and the ones who will be rescued by God when the flood comes.

The first important doctrine to pull practically from this text, which will in turn open up myriads of other Scriptural passages to even the casual bible reader, is that *God never changes just because man sins.* We often believe that because Adam sinned that God somehow had to *change* His plan. Yet, God never changed His plan, nor can we say that Adam ever *deviated* from God's plan. That would mean that the fall of man took God by *surprise*. But we know that Christ is, "the Lamb slain *before* the foundation of the world," (Rev. 13:8). The death of Christ was planned out before God had even planted a single tree or set one star in the heavens. *His plan* stands. And even though Adam sins against God's holy Law and character, God's requirement for Adam's obedience does not change. Adam is still required to be holy, and live *perfectly* before God. Later, which Scripture will echo many times, and in the words of Christ on the Sermon on the Mount, Leviticus 19:2 says, "be holy for the I the Lord am holy." In other words, "be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect."

Secondly, we should remember that God's promises are *always* faithful. In this genealogical passage we find God's promise of the curse

ringing true. And Adam died, and Seth died, and Enosh died and Canan died...*etc*. Death is reoccurring because the promise of God does not cease with Adam. It continues down the genealogical line of the woman.

There is a real curse. It is not just a theological idea, or a fancifully made up *story* to give us intrigue and suspense as in some secular novel; if you don't believe me you need only to look as far as your mirror to see that the curse is true, that people age, and that people die. When we read the newspaper, when we watch the evening news, we find murder, rape, arson, wars, famine, pestilence, earthquakes and the list doesn't end. Generally, I don't like the news. It is depressing. But the curse is *far more* than just depressing. *Man is fallen and he can't get up*. But God still commands him to perform things *as if* he is standing up straight. Is this unfair? God is not unfair. It simply shows that man is corrupt, though God requires him to remain as holy as Adam was, without spot or blemish, as he was before the fall. Just because men are unable to remedy this themselves because of their *total depravity,* does not make God unfair to require them to do it. Again, God doesn't change His commands simply because men are fallen.

Thirdly, we ought to be reminded that there is hope in the midst of the curse *if people walk with God.* Read this carefully: *if you walk with God* there *is* hope *amidst* the curse. The men of the Lord must necessarily differ from wicked men, by forsaking the course of this world, and walking according to the world to come. They are men of the divine commands, and the duties of God. They are the ones who walk as Adam walked with God pre–fall, as Genesis 3:8 says, "And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day." In the beginning, Adam would walk with God. He had close, personal fellowship with God. Then we find Enoch walked with God for three hundred years in Genesis 5:24, "And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him." Later we find in Genesis 6:9 that Noah walked with God, and in Genesis 17:1 Abram will be instructed to, "walk before Me and be blameless." Even further in Exodus 16:4 God will ask, "whether they will walk in My law or not." In Leviticus 26:3 it says, "If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments, and perform them," and Leviticus

26:12 , “I will walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people.”

You see, we ought to have a solid *theology of walking*. In 2 Chronicles 7:17 God says, “As for you, if you walk before Me as your father David walked.” In Psalm 1:1 it states, “Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly.” Paul tells us in Romans 13:13, “Let us walk properly.” And in 1 Corinthians 7:17 he says, “But as God has distributed to each one, as the Lord has called each one, so let him walk.” Then in 2 Corinthians 5:7, “For we walk by faith, not by sight.” And Galatians 5:25, “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.” And the classic verse in Ephesians 5:8, “Walk as children of light.” The Apostle John says in 2 John 1:6, “…that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, that as you have heard from the beginning, you should walk in it.”

Yes, we ought to have a theology of walking with God. The puritan Robert Bolton said, “That walking with God is the crown of the Christian’s Character.”[24] Enoch’s walking with God was sanctifying to his translation into glory. But that does not mean that walking with God *comfortably* is not necessarily *easy*. Roads that reach destinations may be long and arduous, but the arrival is worth the journey. To hold a proper theology of walking is to hold a continually reforming outlook on sanctification with God. That requires our mortification of sin, and the vivification of our walk with him.

Christians are not simply to walk with God, they are to *comfortably* walk with Him. Enoch had such a special relationship with God; our text tells us he *lived* and *walked* with God, and then God *took him.* Special relationships receive special treatment if one is walking in Christ, with God. The qualifier is the word, “if.” “If you abide in My word, you are my disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free,” (John 8:32).

If you walk with God there is hope in the midst of the curse. Even though you are corrupted, even though you sin, even though you die, there is hope for the saved in the midst of the curse. For the same God who gave the curse also gives us life. Here we must manage the comfort of our life

before God responsibly. Our life is to be a life of faith in Christ. Galatians 2:20 says, “The life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” Faith is the spark of assurance of salvation. It is where the belief in the promises of God aids us to know, believe and follow His Word.

Faith is the well–spring of sanctification. It must be exercised daily, every minute. Mortification and vivification will never occur without a lively exercise of faith in Christ, for it preserves the Christian through every path. From prosperity (to be humble) to need (to be dependent) faith will preserve the Christian. Here is where the Christian must guard himself against the infiltration of the world which overthrows faith, and presses the believer to leave off God and trust in themselves. Trust in *self* arises from a focus on the world. It constitutes the essence of the world’s operation and will perish with it. What perishes is not the object of desire, or the pleasure which it gives, but *desire* itself. All worldly objects of desire must in the end prove unsatisfactory, because of their transitory character. They are temporary only to pull us away from looking to Christ as our focus. Permanent value attaches only to such things as correspond to God’s plan for the world and men. This is the point of the New Testament exhortation and explanation of the contrast between the Christian value structure and the world’s value structure. They are opposed to one another completely. This is why the Christian must meticulously manage every sphere of life. If they are doing all to the glory of God, then all of life is managed for Christ.

There is ultimate relief from the curse in the plan of God through the Messiah. The Messiah, the Seed to come from Eve’s perspective, and the Gospel stated to her in Genesis 3:15, is the only place one will find relief from the curse. Most people think they can just believe in God and everything is OK. *You can believe in God and be lost*. Philosophers and intellectuals do it all the time. Remember, even *the demons believe and tremble*. But we must be rescued from the curse to a level greater than mere belief. Only the work of the Messiah, who is Jesus Christ, can save you. Jesus is, “the Balm of Gilead”, (Jeremiah 8:22). He is the *medicine* that the disease of the curse cannot withstand. The text actually states, “Is there no balm from Gilead?” Gilead was known for its medicine. But there

is only one relief from the curse, and no, it is not Noah. However, this *Balm* will come *from* Noah. This Balm is Jesus Christ. In the incarnation Christ came down into the filth of humanity and walked in the midst of the curse. But in that midst He brought relief as the Prophet, Priest and King of God who dealt with the core problem of the curse. He appeased the wrath of God because He was sinless and perfect. Adam's descendants lived and died. Jesus lived, then died, then lived again. The descendants of Adam could never be sinless without Christ. God's wrath is what makes the curse *a curse*. It is what makes hell, hell. Remember Genesis 3 – *God* curses them, and God is the only one who can alleviate that curse through His own power. Christ coming as man is God in the flesh, and through His one and only sacrifice alleviated the curse for those for whom He died.

But how does a person *receive* the relief that comes only from the Messiah? Relief from the curse only comes if a man or woman is walking with God. If you are not walking with God you will not receive relief. You will live all your days under the curse, not even knowing that you are under a curse and always wondering why there is so much evil in the world. Then you will die, will be judged of God and sent to hell under His wrath where the worm does not die and the fire is not quenched. In that scenario there is no hope. People despise hell so much, (and they should), that they make up new ideas about hell. They want it to be a place where they have a party, or where the BBQ is, or where all their friends are. They never entertain the idea of being under the wrath of God *forever*. But that is the reality of *having no hope*. People who do not walk with God are *walking with the devil*. Those people will share the same fate as he will. Hell was made for the devil. Rev. 20:10, 15 says, "The Devil...was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are...and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. Anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire." It is not enough that the wrath of God will be on you in hell, but the demons will be sharing your space as well. And just think, many people say, "I don't care that I am going there." That statement in and of itself is a statement of *hopelessness*.

What does, "walking with God," mean for you? It means you have a relationship with God as Enoch did, for 300 years, or 50 years, or 85

years or however long your life is. Leviticus 26:3 says, “Walk in my statutes and commandments and perform them...I will walk among you and be your God.” Paul exhorts us in Col. 2:6, “As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him.” You, like Enoch, need to be *God’s friend*, going in the same direction *as* God. That means you have to know *what direction God goes in*. God’s direction can be summed up in one word – *holiness*. You can measure your walk to a certain extent by seeing if what you do, and who you are, reflect an attitude and an example of *holiness* as God desires it. When you are holy that is where you are the mirrored reflection of God’s character.

Enoch desired God above all things. There was nothing in the text that mentioned anything other than the summation of Enoch’s life – he walked *with God*. What does “walking with God” entail? It means forsaking everything and walking alongside of Christ. As Thomas Mockett taught in his work, “The Christian’s Duty to Forsake All for Jesus Christ,” *That every Christian should, and the wise Christian will, willingly part with all for Christ and the grace of the Gospel*. Are you willing to do this?

If you walk *away* from Christ then you walk with the devil. There is no middle ground. Christ must be in *all* our thoughts, captivated by Him always, focused on Him, seeking Him, resting on Him, trusting Him, and following Him in everything. Consider this passage which every Christian ought to memorize, “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God,” (Col. 3:1–3). That means we are to be engaged for Christ in all we do. We have no time to be idle. Did you know that Jesus said He will judge us for every idle thought we have? (Matthew 12:36). Instead, our minds ought to be overrun with thoughts of the Savior and what He has done for us in saving us from the curse, and bringing relief.

Everything you do ought to have a connection with Christ. Nothing you do should be done apart from Christ. You should not be able to go anywhere or do anything that is not in connection with Christ. Psalm

1:2 says our meditations about God and His ways are to be done, “day and night.” It is a constant endeavor.

When we walk with God it hurts us to fall into sin and we cannot rest until the relationship with Christ is reconciled again. Paul said, “O wretched man that I am. Who will deliver me from this body of death?! Thanks be to Christ Jesus our Lord!” (Romans 7:24–25). We willingly give ourselves to the Spirit as an open book for Him to examine us. “Search me O God, and know my heart...” (Psalm 139:23). “Examine me O Lord and prove me; try my mind and my heart,” (Psalm 26:2). We always are striving to conform to Christ’s will and *His* way searching for every morsel of hope and relief we can glean from Jesus Christ while we live in the midst of the curse.

Do you have relief? Do you have hope? If you are walking with God then the religious aspects of the Christian life will show forth their fruit and confirm to you that you are walking with God. Couple that together with the testimony of the Word of God and the internal work of the Holy Spirit in your life and you will walk comfortably with Him in the midst of the curse.

CHAPTER 18:
THE WICKEDNESS OF MAN

"And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, 2 That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. 3 And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. 4 There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown. 5 And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6 And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. 7 And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them. 8 But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD." (Genesis 6:1–8).

In the beginning of this chapter, we find two themes. First, we find God destroying the world by a flood, and secondly, God's salvation to Noah. Both of these are critically important in the text, and they house within them some very important, but difficult, truths that every Christian must wrestle with.

One of the passages in this text that many theologians have found difficult to interpret is the reference to the sons of God and the daughters of men. Genesis 6:1–2, "Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose."

The phrase, "sons of God" is at best unclear. Some believe them to be fallen angels, some believe them to be kings who were possessed by

demons, and some believe them to be of the godly line of Seth. This latter interpretation seems to fit best in lieu of the purpose of the first few chapters of Genesis. Since we are dealing with a book of *genealogies*, it is most reasonable to believe that the *sons of God* were God worshippers, and the daughters of men (another genealogy), were of the wicked line of God–haters. Two genealogical lines are given, and the detrimental point is that they *mixed*. Sethites took to themselves the daughters of Cain. The lines *became* mixed. The godly took to themselves women from the *line of the serpent*. Why did they do this? They did this due to sin. They *coveted* them. The Hebrew, "saw," means to *check out* or "look over". In contrast to self–choice of these daughters, Adam was *given* Eve. The sons of God, though, took those they chose because they saw them beautiful to look at; you know, those like the women on the covers of those magazines *you see* when you check out in the grocery line. Sound familiar? Like Eve, they took and ate. The fruit of wickedness is found seeing, taking and acting on those same kinds of twisted desires.

As a result of the mixture, and the further, "watering down," of the lines, God sets limits on the amount of time He will allow men *to be* wicked. Genesis 6:3, "And the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years." The Spirit of God *striving* is not simply meaning the *presence* of the Holy Spirit, but the power of the working of the Spirit in the preaching of Noah's righteous message to repent and follow God. We glean this from the help of passages like 2 Peter 2:5, who call Noah, "a preacher of righteousness." God will not *strive* with men any longer – why? God will not continue to make the preaching of the Word continue to be effectual among men. Rather, He is going to judge the world because men are evil. Men are flesh – or rather, they are filled with evil desires that are wicked all the time. It would be strange for God to say that He will not strive with men because they are *flesh* – that is the way He created them – flesh and bones. Rather, fleshliness is now and throughout the Bible a signifying word or phrase meaning wicked *and evil* – of *fleshly desires*. It is vain for the Spirit of God to strive and dispute with the flesh which is incapable of right spiritual reason. As a result, God will judge them. When will God do this thing? 120 years. Some interpret this 120 years to mean the length of days men will live. But this cannot mean that

men will only now live for 120 years. Abraham lived to be 175, Isaac to 180, Shem even lived to be 600. When God spoke these words Noah, He spoke them in the 480th year of Noah's life. The promise was made to Noah at this time, and that set the timeframe for *when the flood would come* and *destroy the earth*, which happened when Noah was 600 years old, *120 years later*.

In verse 32 there is a note that Noah was 500 years old and had sons, but this is not a chronological timeline here, it is an explanation of redemptive history. Sometimes chronologies are out of order, as when Terah died, but then Isaac was born to Abraham, but Terah was still alive when Isaac was born. Noah received the promise at 480, and then at 600 the flood came. Moses simply wants us to see the timeline of events that occurs before promised judgment due to the mixture of the two lines.

After this mixture of the lines, the *mixed breed* were born. Genesis 6:4 says, "There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown." The "Nephilim" or "giants" could be a repetitive phrase for the "fierce warriors," or men of renown. The point here is that *men* became heroes instead of God, (verse 4). People were bragging about *men of renown* but they were not bragging about the walk they have with God. The word, "renown," or, "name," gives us the idea that these warriors had external distinguishing marks. This is opposite to the walking with God that has, first, internal distinguishing marks. The way of the Spirit was being pressed aside to make room for men of renown who seemed marvelous in their outward acts.

We find as an anti–climax to the passage, the wickedness of man. Genesis 6:5 explains, "Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." This gives us all we need to know concerning the reason righteous judgment is coming. The word, "wickedness," means, "evil." This evil, "was great." It connotes that the evil was, "many or much", or in some other passages the word can mean, "chief or captain." This, "evil," which was everywhere seen (*much*), was, "in the earth," *all*

through it. What was evil? The evil concerned the manner in which *men thought*. It was respective of their very existence. Let's look at this point in detail.

"Every," thought of man was evil. Is that hyperbole? Not at all. This passage is a commentary on the reason why God's sore judgment was inflicted across the entire planet. "Every," means "whole, all, complete, or absolutely everything." Every *thought* was evil. The words, "imagination or intent" mean to "*form and fashion plans and purposes for one's life in the mind.*" Every thought was evil. Every thought, imagination or intent man ran through his depraved brain was evil, and this was the case across the whole earth. As a matter of fact, this evil intention reached into the very depth of man's being, "of his heart." This phrase means, "the totality of man's inner being," or his "image." The heart is the spiritual center of a person. His heart was *only* evil. "Was only" comes from the word meaning "*thin.*" It refers to the idea that the heart of man was evil, with every intention and every thought concerning his life, and his thoughts and intentions were *only this and had no other thoughts.* He was very *shallow* in this regard. They were "evil," completely contrary to the goodness of God, completely contrary to walking with God, and they were no good *whatsoever,* at any time. As a matter of fact, they were no good, "all the day long." This means, "continually all day every day." If this does not cause the reader to pause, which is Moses' intention in the passage, then the reader misses the underlying truth concerning the nature of man after the fall. Subsequently, missing this theological point will ruin the reader's interpretation of man being made in the image of God, and that image being fallen, throughout the rest of the bible.

This passage does not stop being difficult. Next, the reader comes face to face with a theological problem concerning God's character. This problem is at least noted as a result of a cursory reading of the passage. Here we find the, "repentance of God." Genesis 6:6–7 says, "And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. So the LORD said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them." The text says that God was, "sorry that he had made man on the earth, and he was grieved in His

heart," verse 6; and "sorry" in verse 7 is the same. The word "sorry" is actually a very good translation. The Hebrew may be defined a bit more to mean "repent", but it is not the same kind of repenting one does from sin. Instead, God is grieved or sorrowful from what He sees on the earth. God can be grieved when people sin. He knows a better way for men to walk than to walk in sin. Rather, they ought to walk with Him instead of against Him. The whole of the earth was under the sorrow of God. This type of sorrow is linked to, "emotional sorrow and pain," "to writhe, be hot with anger, weary and irritated." God's sorrow is manifested in the flood, which ends with His judgment on the wicked. Was God really emotionally distraught enough to be sorry?

God does not repent like men. Instead, this language of repenting and being sorrowful is the same kind of language the psalmist uses in Psalm 91. We find God there having, "shadows," having "feathers," and, "wings." But this is what we call *language after the manner of men*. Phrases like this are language tools to help us (who are merely human) attempt to understand the relationship God has with sin, or holiness. God doesn't "become" anything. He does not become sad, become mad, become happy or become indifferent. God is the same yesterday today and forever, and He does not change. "For I am the LORD, I change not," (Mal. 3:6). Why then does the Holy Spirit allow Moses to use words that seem to make God "reactionary"? Man sins, and he sins so much that God is reactionary – He is sorry He made man. The reason, the word of God is given *for us*. We are to look at the situation and see it as reactionary, knowing full well that either sin or holiness has a specific reaction to God's covenant relationship with his people, or not. Take the moon as an example. You walk outside, look straightway into the face of the full moon. Let's call that relationship 1. Then you close your eyes; let's call that relationship 2. You now cannot see the moon. Then you turn around facing in the opposite direction. Let's call that relationship 3, but you open your eyes and can see the effects of the light bouncing off the moon on, say, your house. In all 3 scenarios we could describe the various *reactions* of the *moon* to the way we are turned or not turned to it. But did the *moon* change? Or was it your relationship to the moon that changed? Did the moon change, or your perspective about the moon's relationship with objects change? Relationally is how Moses is pressing us to consider the

wickedness of man in response to God's omniscient eye. It is relational on the part of men which prompts the writer to speak after the language of men. That way we have the reaction that God is upset with this situation. And yes, He should be. He is holy, and men are wicked. You should be as upset with wickedness as God is. Are you reading the passage that way, or have you missed the point of that reactionary language?

And yet, though men are wicked, and God is sorry that He made them, there is a mark of *hope*. Genesis 6:8, "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD." One man stood out from the rest because God's grace had reached down and touched him. "But *Noah* found grace in the eyes of the Lord." The word, "found," means, "to gain acceptance," and has the connotations of, "being captured". *Grace* is what made Noah accepted, or captured, before God. Grace is the unmerited favor of God resting on a person simply through the pleasure of God's own will. It is the blessing *of God*. It is the salvation *of God*.

The first doctrine to consider in this whole passage is the focus on the wickedness of man. The Bible mentions the word *sin* over 475 times. Sin is a serious subject. We know it is an important subject, especially when it is mentioned almost as much as the *holiness of God*. To ponder the immense treatment the Bible gives the doctrine of sin is mind–boggling. In Genesis 2:8–17, God creates man, puts him in the garden He has created, and then instructs the man to follow His Word not to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. It was a time of *testing*. God was saying, listen to My Word, do not eat of the tree and you will live, but if you do eat of it, "you will surely die." Then the serpent came into the picture, tempted Eve, Adam's wife, and she gave in and ate of the forbidden fruit. She then gave some to her husband and he ate of it as well. They sinned. They failed the test. God cursed the serpent for deceiving them, and he cursed the woman and the man for disobeying Him. Adam and Eve were now sinners in the eyes of God. They were consequently cast from the Garden of Eden, into the wilderness and away from His presence. God cursed Adam's lineage, all his posterity, for disobedience which applies to all men, Romans 5:12, "...just as through one man sin entered the world and death through sin, thus, death spread to all men, because all sinned." Adam's sin was representative of all of us. Adam was the

representative on behalf of the whole human race. We are not sinners because we sin. We sin because we are sinners in Adam. We have inherited the fallen nature which Adam acquired after "falling" from grace in the garden. We have a rotten nature that is corrupt through and through. Yes, every imagination and thought of your heart is evil. Is all this *too much for you to believe*?

In this sin nature, men inherit a wicked and evil heart. Memorize Genesis 6:5, "And the Lord saw the wickedness of man was great in the earth and every intent and thought of his heart was only evil continually." The heart is the place where mind, emotions, and spirit all reside in a collective whole; it is *the man*. The sinful heart is *only* evil, and anyone who has one of these hearts is evil. You have one and I have one. And every intent (or motive) and thought (or every idea) is *only* evil continually. The word "continually" means "day in and day out." All day long, every day, the whole of man's heart is evil. It is constantly evil. *Your* heart is constantly evil.

Someone may ask, "When does a man's heart *become* evil?" David stated in Psalm 51:5, "In sin my mother conceived me." The very moment David was conceived in his mother's womb he was a sinner. So, the answer to the question is upon conception. Adam's sin, his sin nature, is given to all his offspring, including children and babies and those just conceived. Romans 3:23, "All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." The depravity, or sinfulness of man is a doctrine which is vital to understanding salvation. Most of the church today does not understand the doctrine of the sinfulness of man. People think that man still has the capacity to be good. They think people are just *sick* in sin and not *dead* in sin. They think people are able, in and of themselves, to do works of righteousness before God without the help of God at all. But unregenerate people cannot work righteously before God. Saved people, by the power of the Spirit of God, are able to work righteously only because they have the Spirit dwelling in them. Whenever someone says that they can believe in Christ for salvation on their own, or choose to follow Him on their own before the Spirit of God changes their heart, then they are saying man is good because the Fall of Adam has not totally corrupted them. They can still perform righteous deeds such as *choosing salvation* or *choosing to*

walk with God. They are not following the Bible at this point, but rather the teaching of *Pelagius*. Pelagius was a heretic in the 4th century who taught that Adam's sin didn't affect us at all, and we are conceived as a blank slate. We only become sinners as we sin. This completely disregards the point of the first 6 chapters of Genesis.

Man is a sinner because of Adam, and from the time of conception, has a fallen sin nature. That sin nature is what causes man to commit, "sins." Because of this nature man's whole disposition is evil. It remains evil until the Spirit of God changes his heart by applying the blood of Jesus Christ. This gives him the capacity to believe. The total person, mind, emotions and spirit, have been completely affected by the fall. Man is corrupted completely and depraved totally. *All* the faculties of man are evil, not just parts of him. Every thought, every intention, every part of his heart was *only evil continually*.

Ok, Ok already, I get the point. Stop badgering me about being a sinner. I can only take so much of that. Is there some good news to all this? Interestingly, there is. But it took thousands of years for God to bring the good news of the Messiah to fruition. Why? Because people hate the bad news.

So, there is no Gospel (good news) without the bad news. We must get through the bad news before we get through to the good news about the Savior. The problem is that people only want good news, then more good news, but no bad news. The cross only answers to those who are sinful, not "good." Jesus is the Physician for the sick, not the healthy.

Man must call out to God and throw himself upon His mercy to be saved. He must follow the directive of the tax collector in Luke 18:13 and say, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner." Men need to be humbled by their sin before Jesus Christ exalts them. When the Holy Spirit invades the heart of a man and changes that heart to respond by faith, that man must repent of his sin and turn from his wicked ways. He must die to sin and live to righteousness. He must mourn over his depravity and see himself as totally helpless, poor in spirit, before the Almighty Christ. He must see his life hanging by a thread over the depths of hell and its flames, knowing full well that God is the only Redeemer through which he can be saved. At

any moment the thread could snap, and the woe of hell could begin, but in Christ there is good news and hope.

Without recognizing, by the Spirit's power, man's *Total Depravity,* their utter sinfulness, men will never understand what it means to be *saved*.

A second point to remember in this passage is the length of time the Spirit will strive with men. This is actually a scary notion. God will put up with bringing men the means of grace *only for so long*. If the Spirit is not striving with Noah's preaching any longer, how long will God put up with the wickedness of men *today*? We know God will not destroy the earth by a flood. But He makes no mention in giving men ample time or opportunity. There are places in the evangelism of the nations when God tells Paul, go here, not here. Acts 16:7 says, "After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them." Really? There was a place where sinners lived and the Spirit did not *permit* them to go evangelize there? If the Spirit's efficacy is not in the Word to convert, His Spirit will not strive with men to change them. God was upset that men were acting wickedly, and as a result, would not bless men. Is that not grieving the Spirit of God? Ephesians 4:30 says, "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God." Stephen even told the Israelites in Acts 7:51, "You stiff–necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you."

There is a time limit to God's allowance of saving grace to roam to and fro across the earth. Hebrews 10:26–27 says, "For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries." When men despise the ministry of the Word, God will not strive with them. Christopher Love said, "God will not follow the Word with efficacy to those who either condemn or deny the ministry thereof." When men increase in sin, and continue to love sin more than God, even in the midst of the most righteous preacher, (like Noah), God will not strive with men. He will not make the Word effectual to them. His Spirit *no longer* strives with them.

God is sovereign over the appointed ends of wicked rebellious men, and if He decides to withhold the effectual working of His Spirit, as He has and did in Noah's day, and other days, then He has the right to do so. God may remove His Spirit in making the Word effectual, or convicting men of their sin after the act. That is why consciences are seared who continue in sin. That is why men, today, pull their sin as if with a cart and rope in the view of all (Isaiah 5:18). Yes, God is longsuffering, but do not think for a minute that the patience of the Lord could not be worn out. The state of the world in Noah's time was *unfit* for the purposes for which it was created – to glorify God. How long may it be until this world, again, will seem unfit and the end shall come?

What is your response to the teaching of man's Total Depravity? Ask yourself, "What does it mean to be dead?" Ephesians 2:5 says we are "dead in sin." *Dead, its etymology:* before the 12th century it meant deprived of life, (1) lacking power to move, feel, or respond, extinguished <such as dead coals>, inanimate, inert <such as dead matter> no longer producing or functioning, exhausted <such as a dead battery>, lacking power or effect <such as a dead law>. The Greek word in Ephesians 2:5 is *necros*, meaning dead, lifeless; a corpse, and it can mean useless, and ineffective. *Dead* is not "kinda alive", or "alive" by any means. We are sinners from conception, (Psalm 51:5), stillborn, in essence, or even *walking zombies*.

What does this mean *practically*? It means we are completely, "affected in all our parts." The heart – (Genesis 6:5), the mind (Romans 8:7), the affections (Gal. 5:16), and the body (Genesis 2:17). We are totally depraved in our nature. We cannot act in any righteous manner without being regenerated by divine grace.

Is being depraved in this way different than committing, "actual sins?" (Jer. 17:9). Yes. The original sin we have that corrupts our nature is called *original sin.* We received that from Adam. *That* sends us to hell. But actual sin, sins we commit, simply aggravate our time in hell if God does not save us. Going to hell is one thing, but think about all the sins a person actually commits during their whole life, in word, thought and deed, which

aggravate the ultimate sentence when they appear before the judgment seat of Christ? It is beyond words to ponder it.

Each human being is at enmity with God from the moment of conception because he is born dead in sin. Adam's imputed sin transferred to us reckons our account defiled. You might hear people often say, *But I am such a good person – or know such good people*. A man's best works are defiled before God. "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." (Isa. 64:6). Each human being is in need of the Savior to save them from the original sin of Adam, and the compounded guilt of their own actual transgressions.

Christ is the Great Physician and you are in need of an operation on your mind, body and heart. Think you can save yourself? That's delusional. How long will a junkyard car stay in the junkyard until it fixes itself? But you say self–help is helpful. How long will a junkyard car stay in the junkyard until another junkyard car comes to help the first one? Self–help is a delusion. It is in defiance of God and should be repented of.

Total Depravity continually builds godly humility. Humility is to know *not that you were unworthy*, but *worthless*. Humility is to *kiss the Son lest He be angry with you and you perish in the way*, (Psalm 2:12). What did Christ do for you in loosing the chains of sin? And what is our habitual demonstration for this? Is it devotion? *Humility* is the repentance of pride, unless you think you have accomplished something, or done something when all you have done is sin. And we sin far worse than the devils, for when our depravity shows forth, *we sin against the blood of Christ*.

Humility reminds us to see the cup half empty – men are not only destitute of righteousness, but full of unrighteousness. Yet, God delights to see sinners humble. "But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word," (Isa. 66:2).

If we know about our depravity, it ought to press us to hate sin all the more. Romans 7:15 says, "For what I am doing I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice, but what I hate, I do." If you

do not hate sin, you do not have the Spirit of God living in you. For just as God was grieved in Genesis 6, He also pours out His grief into their hearts when His children sin. The Holy Spirit will give you a conviction of grief for the sin you commit for He lives in you, provided you have been the recipient of God's blessing and grace. As a Christian you should strive to have your sins covered over by the blood of the cross just as God covered the earth with the flood.

Take a lesson from God's striving with men, and His limitation in doing so. Will God bless *you* in your sin? Or, will He withhold His Spirit? The Christian life is made up of spiritual levels, (levels of sanctification), and many times Christians are all over the map on trying to be more sanctified. They are *reaching* for sanctification, but in their sin, how much of God's Spirit will be communicated to them? How long will God be patient with rebellious children?

Knowing about total depravity should cause us to love Jesus Christ all the more; He should increase and we should decrease. Jesus is the Savior, *not you*. If you are converted by His grace, *Jesus saved you by His blood*, He *accepted you*, a sinner, into His kingdom. He washed you clean when you were filthy. He pardoned your transgressions when they were stacked as high as heaven, infinitely high. *He* died on the cross, *He* is Savior. Only *He* has the ability to save sinners; *not you*.

The only way out of the bondage of sin is through the blood of Jesus. Can you imagine the Israelite who had to rest on the sacrificial system day after day and week after week and year after year to offer up lambs and goats and pigeons and such, for their sin? The line to bring sacrifices for sin was very long. And by the time they gave their sacrifice to the priest, and they started to walk back to their house, there they go again – their mind is filled with wickedness and they would need to get back into line again. Say with Augustine, "No one can find rest until they rest in Thee," *in Jesus Christ*. God told his people in the Old Testament, in Ezekiel 36:26, "I will remove the heart of stone and replace it with a heart of flesh." And *God does this* by the power of the Spirit of God. *Jesus* can make a person born again.

For the Christian, this doctrine helps us to understand *grace*. *Noah found grace*, he was *captured* by it, and he *rested*. His very name means *rest*. And those who have not found grace, who have not been captured by Christ's cross, you need to repent of your sins, and turn from them through the power of the Spirit. If you have understood this passage, if God has opened your eyes and ears you need to throw yourself upon His mercy and say, "O Lord be merciful to me, a sinner." And God will be. God is merciful to sinners who throw themselves on His mercy. God is merciful to unregenerate sinners. God is merciful, and in Him you can find rest from sin and the wickedness of the world.

CHAPTER 19:
THE FLOOD

“These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God. 10 And Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. 11 The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. 12 And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. 13 And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth. 14 Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch. 15 And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits. 16 A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it. 17 And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die. 18 But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons’ wives with thee. 19 And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee; they shall be male and female. 20 Of fowls after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the earth after his kind, two of every sort shall come unto thee, to keep them alive. 21 And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and thou shalt gather it to thee; and it shall be for food for thee, and for them. 22 Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he…All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died. 23 And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark. 24 And the waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days,” (Genesis 6:9 to 7:24).

We find that this account of mankind's destruction is one of swift and terrible judgment on sinful rebellion. The narrative begins by contrasting Noah with his generation, the way of the righteous, with the way of open rebellion against God. It continues by describing *how* God judged the wicked and started a new people with those who were righteous. It concludes with the sacrifice of a worshiping community that escaped the great judgment. In it all, Noah became the means of saving the human race. We are only looking at the first half of the narrative. In the next chapter we will look at 8:1–22 which continues the narrative.

There is a great contrast between the wicked and the chosen people of God. First, God instructs the *righteous* to prepare to escape the judgment of the wicked, (6:9–22). Here we find, again, a theology of *walking*. In verse 9, "Noah walked with God." This section contrasts Noah with the corrupt generation who rejected his preaching concerning impending doom and God's wrath. Noah and his family were touched by God's grace to be delivered. They lived a life of faith in God and they guarded themselves against the spots of the world. Noah meticulously managed every sphere of life. He forsook *everything* and walked alongside of God. To hold a proper *theology of walking* is to hold a continually reforming outlook on sanctification with God.

Noah was, "righteous," and, "blameless," and was the opposite of the contrasted people who the text says were, "corrupt," and, "violent." Noah is described as, "a just and blameless man," "a wholly righteous man." *Blameless* describes a perfect, flawless, or complete individual. In Leviticus it is used to describe the sacrificial animals as *perfect*, those without blemish. The term is also later used of Abram in the manner he is to walk before God (Gen. 17:1). Noah, being, "righteous," really describes a *covenantal relationship* and *proper conduct* within the covenant. The righteousness of Noah was a demonstration of conformity to the requirements of the relationship he had with God. The narrative contrasts this with the wicked who were rebelling against God.

The corruption of the earth is seen in Genesis 6:12, "So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had

corrupted their way on the earth." God will not allow us to forget man's wickedness. We have found before that this corruption was a result of the fall. This corruption of the earth is given in two stages: verse 11 states that the earth was corrupt and full of violence, and then verse 12 records that God saw the earth (recalling the wording of Genesis 1 and 6:5) that it *was* corrupt. And then it is added that *all flesh* had corrupted itself. Three times in these two verses the term, "corrupt," is used. This word, as well as well the word, "violence", gives a graphic description of human nature *at its worst*. And that is where human nature always is.

The wicked behavior that God saw filled the earth, with the exception of Noah. Noah will be saved out of this corruption, but when all this destruction is over, the wicked will be gone. Only righteousness will remain.

God calls Noah to build an ark, to prepare it in verses 14–21. The rest of the chapter records these instructions for building and filling the ark, and then we hear the refrain of Noah's obedience. The size of ark is important, in that it is 300 cubits long by 50 wide by 30 cubits high. The size of this ark is enough to hold 52 train box cars worth of goods or animals. The amount that Noah needed to house all the animal representatives of the earth at the time was only about 30 train box cars. Keep in mind, God told Noah to bring in animals 2 by 2. Nowhere does it say all the animals were *mature*. He did not tell him what age these animals were. No doubt, the ark was filled with babies, making this the most enormous floating nursery ever constructed. And yet, Noah was instructed to bring a representative pair of everything, in verse 17, and the word, "everything" means just that. The only difference in the order or corralling of the animals was that for those animals used in sacrificial worship (which needed to be more mature for worship purposes), Noah was to bring 7 representatives.

Then God mentions His covenant with Noah in Genesis 6:18, "But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall go into the ark; you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you." God "cuts" a redemptive covenant with Noah to begin with a clean slate. We will touch more on this in the next chapters dealing with the Noahic Covenant

throughout Genesis 8. For now it is enough to know that Noah was in a special relationship with God which was different than that of every other family on the planet. And Noah obeyed God, Genesis 6:22, “Thus Noah did...”

“Noah did according to all that God commanded him—so did he,” *is most important*. Here we see what it means to walk with God, or to be righteous. Noah did everything God told him to do. No doubt, Moses wanted the Israelites to see that even amidst a perverse generation the righteous live in a holy manner. This would be instructive for Israel under the law. What would Israel do? Would they obey God? Would they grumble? Would they murmur? Would they be content? Would they rebel?

We find in Genesis 7:1 that Noah enters the ark, “Then the LORD said to Noah, “Come into the ark, you and all your household, because I have seen that you are righteous before Me in this generation.” Noah and his family entered the ark with the animals. The animals came into the ark *miraculously* under the power of God (7:9, 15). Genesis 7:8–9 says, “Of clean animals, of animals that are unclean, of birds, and of everything that creeps on the earth, 9 two by two they went into the ark to Noah, male and female, as God had commanded Noah.” And then God, “shut him in,” Genesis 7:16, “So those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him; *and the LORD shut him in.*” God’s sovereignty is seen in this passage. God is in complete control. He will preserve His people while simultaneously destroying the wicked in catastrophic judgment.

It is expedient that this generation of sinners should die so that all others might be warned of the coming wrath of God. But the development of the narrative follows two sides: those who entered the ark were safely shut in by the Lord, but all those outside the ark died. Noah, then, sailed through the judgment to a new age. We see that *catastrophe* does not interrupt God’s desire to bless the world.

The judgment on the earth was total, Genesis 7:21, “And all flesh died that moved on the earth: birds and cattle and beasts and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, and every man. All in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, all that was on dry land died.”

God does not *kill* them, He *destroys* them. Genesis 7:23, “So He destroyed all living things which were on the face of the ground: both man and cattle, creeping thing and bird of the air.” They were *destroyed* from the earth. Only Noah and those who were with him in the ark remained alive. The word, “destroy,” means to, “blot out.” The righteous are established by the promise of the covenant and the wicked are blotted out from God’s mercy and grace. Moses will write later, “Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book,” (Exod. 32:33). And so the rain came, and the people outside the ark were totally destroyed, blotted out from existence on the earth where the waters prevailed one hundred and fifty days.

Doctrinally, we ought to see here, first, the peculiar relationship that God has with sin. God hates sin. “O Lord, You have appointed them for judgment; O Rock, you have marked them for correction. You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on wickedness,” (Habakkuk 1:12–13). Not only that, but God hates *sinners* who sin. We often hear the cliché, “hate the sin and love the sinner.” God *never* says that. Instead He says, Malachi 1:2–3, “Jacob I loved but Esau I hated,” (*cf*. Rom. 9:13). God hates the sin and the sinner who sins. He detests the vessels of wickedness, for if He did not He would not have destroyed *the entire world* by the flood. John Bunyan, the writer of *Pilgrim’s Progress* gives us a devotional definition of sin. This should causes us to ponder sin deeply, “Sin is the dare of God’s justice, the rape of His mercy, the jeer of His patience, the slight of His power, and the contempt of His love.”

God hates sin because of His holiness. God is holy, and anything opposed to His holiness is opposed to Him. So, God judges sin. The flood, in this instance, is God’s wrath *against* sinful man. And so what happened to men? Men died. It is twice as bad for these types of people; they die a horrible death by the hand of God then they are judged in their sin by God and sent to hell, the place of *eternal torment*. The flood, in this way, parallels the end times where we find the saved *separated* from the wicked. Matthew 25 describes for us the account of the separation of the righteous who have received grace and the wicked who receive wrath. Separation is God’s way of removing the chaff from the wheat, the goats form the sheep, or the wicked form the righteous.

If God does not utterly destroy wicked men in their rebellion against Him, then He deals with them in one other manner, *through grace*. *Either* God judges sin or He cleanses from sin. And what do we find here but that Noah is the recipient of grace; he is *found* by God.

The ark is a foreshadow of Jesus Christ. When men and women take refuge in the ark they are safe. God shuts them in and keeps them safe. When men and women take refuge in Christ they cannot be anything but safe. Jesus is our Ark.

The narrative of the flood testifies to God's power and freedom over His creation, and the foreshadowing of eschatological judgment. Eschatology is the study of last things. Judgment demonstrates a God who judges sin in *deadly anger*. In light of God's anger and wrath in the flood against sin, God's gracious redemption is that much more meaningful for the vessels prepared for glory, like Noah.

It is very clear that the historical narrative is more interested in the morality of Noah in contrast to the wickedness of evil men. There is no mixture of good with wicked men, no relenting of their rebellion, just violence and corruption. One theologian said, "Basically, the chapter answers the question, *What is the end of humanity*? Can men and women pursue their lives immorally and enjoy the pleasures of this world with reckless abandon? Is this life final or preparatory? With the narrative the answer is clear—everything that had breath died."

Is it easy to see God act justly? It is always difficult for wicked humans to see the harshness of a holy God reacting to wickedness and sin. Note that in the passage overall, there is no word concerning the terror of the lost and no note of hesitancy in the remnant. We can only speculate what response the wicked had to Noah in his preaching of God's judgment. There we find a man building an ark in the middle of a wooded plain, preaching about the end of the world as they knew it. But we find no repentance as we see in the Ninevites in the book Jonah. No, we hear nothing. We just read the commentary of the day, which was a society filled with violence and corruption. They lived as they desired without any attention to Noah's preaching on God's judgment.

No part of the sinful world can remain – we do not even hear the cries or echoes of their fatality expressed. The account of the judgment demonstrates a precursor to the reality of the eschatological event to come. Jesus Christ interpreted this passage in an analogy with the *final judgment*, in which all the wicked will be swept away and only the righteous will enter into the age of the Kingdom. Matthew 24:37–39 says, "But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be." Then Christ explains the parable of the master and the servant, and says in Matthew 24:50–51, "The master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Jesus equates the final eschatological judgment to come with the flood because it is a type of what will soon be. All of humanity was brutally destroyed, and there is no mention of their devastation except *that they all died*. But Christ adds and explains the *further* judgment – the coming judgment of *Christ's wrath* on the wicked *in hell*. The flood, then, is a *type* of hell.

In the same way, in Luke 17, Christ repeats His words about Noah, but also adds in *Sodom*, and then tells us to remember *Lot's wife*. These Old Testament precursors are *nothing* in respect to the coming judgment. Nowhere in the Old Testament do we find the explicit language of the wrath of the Christ as in the eschatological judgment at the end of the age so vividly depicted not only by Christ's own teaching, but also the apostles. John says in Revelation 6:12–17, "I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on

us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?" John quotes 1 Samuel 6:20, "And the men of Beth Shemesh said, "Who is able to stand before this holy LORD God?" The flood is *terrible,* but the end and final judgment will be much worse. The reader ought to keep in mind that the narrative of Genesis chapter 6–7 does not say what happened to them *after* they died; but we *know* what happened.

Another important doctrine we ought to pull from this passage is that the righteous walk with God because of *grace*. Noah was, "found," or, "captured," by God and His grace (Genesis 6:8). Noah *was not* looking, but God was. Romans 3 tell us that, "there is no one who seeks..." Instead, God rescued Noah and warned him in a special manner of the coming judgment. Hebrews 11:7 says, "By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith." People cannot walk with God unless they have received grace, which begins with "godly fear." Such grace is essential to the Christian walk. You cannot live the Christian life without grace. If people claim to be recipients of grace, they should be walking with God in *righteousness*. Jesus expounds in Matthew 7 that good trees do not produce bad fruit.

Not only was Noah captured by God's grace, but he was then *shut in* by God into the ark. Peter tells us in 1 Peter 3:20–22, men, "who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. There is also an antitype which now saves us – baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him." We are instructed that the ark was a type or shadow of grace in Christ, and the waters of the flood, by which Noah and his family were delivered, we akin to baptism. For Noah, though the experience may have been difficult and frightening, it was a picture to demonstrate the safety we have in Jesus Christ, ushered in by the sacrament of baptism.

Christ is the one who shuts us up in the ark of the Church. We are secure in the righteousness of Christ's work and placed within His body. Noah was safe from the flood not by human intervention, but by *divine miracle*. God shut him and his family in the ark. No doubt that what Noah built was sea worthy. But for its *success*, God must shut him in. The worst pressures and battering the floods could offer the ark which was made of wood and tar, God *interposed* and secured them by His hand and kept them safe in *His* ark. In the same way, as the flood furiously came against the ark, so Christ's blood protects us from the wrath of God. God shuts us up in the Church of His bridegroom – Christ: in His work, in His obedience, in His death, in His power, and in His intercession we are kept safe. As Peter says in 1 Peter 3:21, Noah's deliverance was like our baptism. The method of salvation that we receive is demonstrated in our baptism, in the waters that come over us, though we are protected by the work of Christ.

Are you like Noah, safe in the Ark of God? The world hates us, as it hated Noah. In a world which hates people who trust in God, do you trust in Him? *Only* 8 people were saved. And Noah was a preacher, the Spirit of Christ enabling Noah to preach about repentance and grace. But the primeval world rejected Noah and his message, and perished. We, though, like Noah, no matter what the world throws at us, must stand strong in the faith Christ has given us. "If you do not stand firm in your faith you will not stand at all," (Isa. 7:9). Trials, tribulations, hatred, envy, scorn, malice, *etc*., from the world is thrown at us by God to test us to see whether or not we will stand firm. Think this through carefully, Noah built an ark *in the middle of the woods*. No doubt the primeval society thought Noah was *mad*. For us it would be the equivalent of building an air craft carrier (which is smaller than the ark) in the middle of a Nebraska corn field.

Standing strong in the faith is going the distance no matter what God asks of you. God asked much of Noah. Do you think the ark cleaned itself? Imagine the animals, the stench, the feedings, the noise, and the constant attention. Are you Christian enough to shovel manure if that is what God has called you to do in faith? When your boss asks you to compromise your ethics to keep your job will you? When your friends want to go to a bar and have some *fun* will you go? When your girlfriend

or boyfriend takes you to see a movie that you ought not to see, do you go? When the world prompts you to trust in yourself instead of God do you? Noah trusted *in God* with great faith. When people do not do the things which Christians ought to do which are basic and simple – like read the Word each day, pray each day, attend church, tithe to the church, *etc*., they have no business calling themselves Christians. For such people Christianity is only a label, for when the real floodwaters come they will not be able to stand firm in their faith because their faith is just a superficial lie. They don't love the *basics* of the Christian faith and yet expect to stand when the flood waters come?

If we trust in God's plan, we are protected by God in our Christian walk through the ark of Jesus Christ. If Christ is *for us* who can possibly be against us? Christians should have a far different view of life than the rest of the world. Trials and temptations are to be *considered*, "joy," (James 1:3ff). We should understand that the trials and tribulations which come are messengers of God to test our faith.[25] Though God brings us a flood, He will send us an ark to keep us safe from it. Though temptations, trials and tribulations may tempt us to reject the will of God, we have Jesus Christ to keep us safe and secure; cling to His cross – that is our ark.

We live in a world filled with people who do not have Christ, who do not have the Ark which may bring them to safety. Imagine the people outside the ark once it began to rain. No doubt they *ran* to the ark *then*. They scraped and clawed at its hull wanting to find peace and safety inside, but God had already shut up those people He would take care of inside. God shut Noah in and shut the foolish ones out. Imagine those people outside the cross of Christ in the same way. But, there is still time to reach them with the Gospel. Could you imagine what Noah was thinking while the screams from without continued for a time?

"How does God protect us?" We must follow God's commands and directions like Noah did when building the ark. Noah made the ark that *God* wanted him to make, not an ark that he would make or one that he thought would be best. How often is it that God tells you to do something in his word, and you do it as *you* would want and not the way God would want? Noah made an ark by faith, as the writer of Hebrews told

us. No other ark will do for the Christian than to live by faith in any ark that God would have of you. Even in light of the *scoffing* of other men, Noah was faithful to do what God told Him to do. Do you?

CHAPTER 20:
GRACE AND WORSHIP

"And God remembered Noah…And Noah built an altar unto the LORD; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. 21 And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done. 22 While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease," (read in its entirety Gen. 8:1–22 in your copy of Scripture).

Here we find the righteous remnant that God delivers establishing a new order in the earth, (8:1–22). This culmination of the narrative would be encouraging for believing Israel. Noah, the recipient of grace, the righteous man who walked with God, survived the judgment on the wicked and established a new order in the, "life to come." The theme running through this is that God will again redeem His chosen people from His judgments.

After the flood subsides, God restores His creation after the judgment is complete, (verses 1–19). The first part of this chapter details the creation theme, telling how the waters abated, dry land appeared, foliage grew, and humankind again inhabited the earth. Throughout Israel's history this pattern would reappear: after any catastrophic judgment God would begin *anew* with the remnant. The chapter begins with the communication that God *remembered* Noah and all the living creatures in the ark. This expression says far more than that God suddenly recalled the plight of the remnant. The word, "remember," (*zdkar*) will show that God's remembering always implies His *movement toward the object*. The essence of God's remembering lies in His acting toward someone because of a previous commitment. To say, "God remembered Noah," is to say that God faithfully kept His promise to Noah by

intervening to end the flood. In contrast, God *did not remember* the wicked – He forgot them.

The theme of *rest* should be considered prominently in this section, picking up the ultimate significance of the name given by Lamech in Genesis 5:29. When the text says that the ark came to *rest,* (*wattdnah,* in 8:4), or that the bird did not previously find *a resting place,* (*mdnoah,* in verse 9), there is probably more to the theme than just a physical landing on dry ground. Noah sends forth messengers after the ark *rests.* The ark *rests* on the top of the mountains, (this was in Northern Turkey and Armenia). Lamech's prophecy comes to pass *in part* in that the ark *rests* in *new life*. The raven, the scavenger, flies and comes back until the waters dry up – it does not care to land in mud and filth. But Noah also sends forth a dove, who is not a scavenger, so that if the waters were not down, it would return finding *rest* in the ark – it is a *clean* bird. The dove brings back an olive branch, plucked off from a tree that was exposed. Like those who rest in Christ, the dove finds no rest after it leaves *until* it returns *to the ark* and is *pulled in* by the gracious hand of Noah. The birds did not find *rest* until the wrath of judgment subsided. Finally, the dove is sent out again and does not return.

God told Noah when the flood would come, but not when it would end. Noah exercised both faith and patience under this trial. God's time in showing mercy is the *best* time. Noah *must* wait for the waters to recede. And we see that Noah does not leave the ark until God tells him to. It *could* be that at times Noah wanted to leave the ark. Maybe he felt himself forgotten of God, especially when his affliction of the flood was *so long*. The rain lasted 40 days, but Noah's travail on the ark lasted for 1 year and 10 days. We tend to think that passages we read in Scripture happen, "fast." But this was *not* fast. It was over a year, with the animals, with his family tending the animals, with the contention that boredom may bring his sons, or his daughters, *etc*. Life on the ark was not a cruise. But finally, once the ark *rests*, everything comes out of the ark.

What was the first action Noah accomplished in coming out of the ark? We find that the restored remnant worships the Lord, (verses 20–22). We find God making a covenant with Noah. Noah worship's God, he builds

and altar, *not a house*. The sacrifice of Noah forms the major point in the final section of the narrative. Noah built an altar to the Lord and offered burnt offerings, (‘*olot*), on it of *every* clean beast. The word means, “treading place,” or, “place of the slaughter.”

Noah offered up one of all the clean animals. He had 7 of each. They were burnt offerings; the whole of the offering was given. It was a, “soothing aroma,” for God. The idea of, “soothing,” refers to, “settling down from wrath.” In response to Noah’s offering, the Lord was pleased to accept the sacrifice, “And the LORD smelled a sweet savor.” The terminology in these verses reflects Leviticus 1, which requires the whole burnt offering and describes it as *a sweet aroma offering*. The whole burnt offering represented the worshiper’s total surrender and dedication to the Lord, and the expression of the Lord *smelling* the sweet fragrance represented God’s acceptance. Noah *had* to sacrifice as a sinner, so he worshipped God for two reasons. First, the Creator had created again in this new world, and the creature paid homage to God’s creative power. Secondly, we find the Redeemer redeeming, and the sinner rejoicing.

God then vows to never again curse the ground or destroy man though *he is evil from his youth*. This is a poetic benediction. In God’s vow the stability of the covenant is stated that, “no matter what,” the covenant will remain. God gives a sign – the rainbow. It is a *bow*, or weapon of destruction pointing *upwards*. First, God poured His wrath down to wicked men, now, in His vow to Noah, the bow points upwards. It is the cutting of covenant – as if to say, “If I do not uphold my end of the covenant, then let this be done to me – destruction by the bow.”

The people of God were to be a worshiping people, offering to their God the praise of their lips and the best of their possessions. After the flood, Noah could see that, in addition to the wrath of God on earth, there was also redemption and restoration. No human ever experienced this truth so strongly. How could Noah best express his gratitude to God? The true worshiper, who by God’s grace escaped the catastrophe, in this way confessed his submission to and dependence on God through sacrificial worship. The foundation of this sacrifice is laid in God’s fixed purpose to assert righteousness in the world, to bring men and women out

of a wrong state and to establish them in a true state. In a word, God restored human dependence on Him by making people aware of their *impotence*. By his sacrifice Noah expressed his submission to the gracious government of God in his life and in his world; by it he confessed the evil in himself and his family, which had brought ruin upon the world; and by it he acknowledged the wonder of the wisdom of God in redeeming and restoring life.

Throughout Scripture, God would say again and again that the human heart was *only evil continually*. But when people expressed their faith and submission through sacrifice, God would smell the sweet aroma and say again and again that He was well pleased and that He would dwell with them and be their God. Man's inability and evil nature is redeemed in God's act towards those He loves. Accordingly, the Lord promised that such a judgment would never again come on the human race, even though they were *filled with evil*. The order of creation with its seasons and times would continue.

God judged the wicked with severe and catastrophic judgment in order to start life over with a worshiping community. I word this statement with a future tense because at any given moment in history the lesson of this narrative is a warning of imminent judgment on the corrupt race. It is the prerogative and the will of the holy God to purge the world of evil. At any time, Christ could return and judgment could ensue. Another way to capture the idea is to say that, in the midst of catastrophic judgment, (of the flood), in which the sovereign Lord of creation destroys the wicked world, the servant of God—the recipient of grace—obediently prepares for the life to come and embarks on it in worship. This event then gives us some measure by which we can know *how much God will do* to maintain holiness upon earth. In this catastrophe everyone who strives after godliness may find encouragement, seeing in it the Divine sincerity of God for good and against evil. There is only one other event in history that so obviously shows that holiness among men is the object for which God will sacrifice everything else, the death of Jesus Christ. There is no need now of any further demonstration of God's purpose in this world and His zeal for carrying it out. The event of the Flood has not been forgotten any civilization under heaven (though it may be twisted and retold

incorrectly such as with the *Gilgamesh Epic*), but its moral result on their lives is *nil*. The Christian whose memory is haunted by a dying Redeemer, by the thought of One whose love found its most appropriate and practical result in dying for him, is prevented from much sin, and finds in that love the substance of eternal hope.

I want to cover more extensively here the work of God in establishing a *worshipping* community and the doctrine of *worship*. Noah is the *covenantal* worshipper. There is a great amount of grace found in the naming of Noah. *The righteous must contend with sin* is the meaning behind his name. There is goodness and a sense of comfort to be expected as a result of Noah's birth as we have already seen. God is the author of the good that will result from him.

The doctrines of grace in the preaching of Noah should be noted. Noah was a preacher of righteousness as 2 Peter 2:5 states. Noah preached the doctrine of salvation by the Spirit of Christ, (1 Pet. 3:19–20). Grace is seen, then, in his *name*, in his *coming* and in his *preaching*. Noah exemplifies covenant righteousness in this way; which is what the narrative explained in the previous section. Moses is instructing Israel, that in the midst of a perverse generation, they are to be covenantally faithful, focusing on God's grace. Covenantal faithfulness is a response to regeneration, justification, and faith, to live by progressive sanctification – it is all of grace.

God judged the wicked with severe and catastrophic judgment in order to start life over with a worshipping community. God gathers worshippers around Him. Think through this, that God would rather *destroy* millions of wicked people to have 8 worshipping people to praise Him unhindered. God desires a whole hearted worshipping community to exemplify true holiness. This seems rather extreme. Why would God simply not convert millions of people? Simply answered, Noah worshipped *a sovereign God*. Such a God is both sovereign in his execution of destruction or protection. "But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased," (Psalm 115:3).

Noah's first inclination was to worship God, as one filled with grace. Noah was thinking twofold: what is God's *due*, and Noah's desire to

be *filled with the life of God*. Keep in mind that worship was instituted for man not God. If no one ever worshipped God again, God would not cease to be God; and He would be as holy as He ever was. Worship is a means to *fellowship* with God; a drawing near to Him. Worship was instituted so men may enjoy God who is already enjoying Himself. The joy that God receives in fellowshipping among the Trinity is shared with man. *The Westminster Shorter Catechism* says in Question 1, "What is the chief end of man? Answer 1: Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever." God requires praise and reverence and thanks from Noah because He knows Noah needs to experience grace *more*. Noah is the one who receives the benefit, not God. Many times people think that our worship somehow *enhances* God's experience. No, we cannot add anything to God. Rather, we are the ones who receive the benefit, but *only if we worship rightly*.

Noah received mercy from being delivered in the ark, so he gives thanks to God, by the command of God, *willingly*, for he needs God. It is right to worship God for who He is and what He has done. Most of the time men worship God for what God *does* for them. Noah worships God for who He is *and* what He has done. To distinguish God from the gift is to sin in worship.

What is true covenantal worship? First, covenantal means within the bounds of God's desires, and by oath. In Matthew 15:39 we read, "*In vain* do they worship Me, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men." *In vain*. It is a vain thing to worship God when there is only a commandment *of man* for this worship. If you would worship God, you must have a commandment from God *for* such worship. Isa.29:13 shows how the Lord is offended with any man that shall teach about His fear by their own precepts, "Wherefore the Lord said, forasmuch as this people draw near Me with their mouth, and their lips do honor Me, but have removed their heart far from Me, and their fear towards Me is taught by the precepts of men." Covenantal worship reflects back to God His attributes, or praise, for His *being*. Who God is in His *being* is of prime importance over simply what He does in action. Though the wicked that were destroyed in the flood did not worship God for what He does, they

are, right now, passively worshipping Him in the execution of His justice on them for *who He is*.

The covenanted congregation worships *with* their covenant God. The word, “worship,” in Hebrew means to, “bow down.” Humility is an essential factor in worship. We gladly bow ourselves before God to reflect back to Him His worth. “His worthiness,” is what He means to us. One cannot worship what they do not know. God meant *much* to Noah and we see that in his actions of worship, for worldly care came second to making an altar.

True worship, bowing down and reflecting back to God what God means to us can only be accomplished by true worshippers. Christ said in John 4:23–24, “worship God in spirit and in truth.” These kinds of worshippers, like Noah, are people who are deeply emotional people, (why do you think God chose Jews and not Germans? (*no offence to Germans*)). Jew’s emotional love runs deep, and their objective was to hold steadfastly to sound doctrine that comes from the mouth of God. These two aspects are essentials: feelings for God and the truth of God. Many denominations will tell you, *just*, “feel good about God.” They deem worship as a *feeling* for God’s presence. But feelings are fruits of true worship. They are not the main focus. The fuel of worship is the truth of God, the furnace of worship is the spirit of man, and the heat of worship is the vital affections of reverence, mournfulness over sin, trust, gratitude and joy. Worship is an end in itself, because that was how we were created. Jesus Christ does not *need* men to worship Him, *they need Him.*

Worship is for the creature, it is the highest honor a creature can perform. It is done inwardly by the soul, or outwardly with the body expressing the worship of the soul. This is the difference between thinking silently or outwardly singing the Psalms.

What are some of the elements of true worship? What did Noah have? First, he has a true knowledge and sense of the holy dread of God’s power. Isaiah 8:13 says, “The Lord of Hosts, Him you shall hallow. Let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread.” Noah just went through a catastrophic flood. Holy dread was on the top of his list. Men ought not to speak to God as they speak to others, He is far more holy. Noah did not

chat with God as if he was with his wife, but rather he built an altar and worshipped when he spoke with God.

Also, Noah had longing and desire to please God. Psalm 42:1–2, "As the deer pants for the water brooks, so my soul pants for You, O God." He had a brokenness and a contrite spirit. Matthew 5:3–4 says, "Blessed are the poor in spirit...Blessed are those who mourn..." He had an unhindered joy in the *attributes* of God. Noah knew God intimately! Psalm 63:5, "My soul shall be satisfied...and my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips." He had a sense of drawing near to God. Leviticus 10:3 says, "I will be sanctified in them that draw near to me." If to worship God is to draw close to Him, then to neglect proper worship is to depart from Him.

What can we do to have meaningful, practical worship? Without grace in your life you cannot worship God. How can a man worship God if he cannot understand God? Even what he does in hopeful worship is an abomination if not done according to God's purposes. Proverbs 15:8 tells us, "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, But the prayer of the upright is His delight."

Meaningful worship is executed in preparation. 1 Samuel 16:5 directs us, "Sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice." Your hearts should be *fit* to come into God's presence at any time. How do you know if God has something to speak to your heart about in church that He may never say to you again? You may miss it if you are not prepared to hear it. The Puritans prepared their hearts the night before by reading Scripture, prayer, singing Psalms with family and friends, and a good night's sleep so they would be alert and awake to hear the Word of God preached. So many Christians wear themselves out before church when they should be readying themselves to hear God's voice.

Worship is a state of mind. Col. 3:1 says, "Set your mind on the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God." The world has no business in worship. You must stop being distracted. Reject thinking about the grocery list, the laundry that needs to be done, the leaves that need to be raked, none of this has any part in worship. Instead, you must have *high thoughts of God.* Noah did! Isaiah did, (Isaiah 6:1–2), the twenty–four elders did (Rev. 4). You should be coming to church to

expose yourself to the majesty and holiness of Christ and His power. Church is not your local social club. Worship is deliberate having an interest to gain more of Christ by the end of the service than you had when you entered it.

Why do Christians worship? There are three reasons to cover here. First, like Noah was reminded, there is the Creator/creature distinction. Noah *had* to be trembling while building the altar, seeing the devastation all around. God the Creator has created you and you the creature pay homage to Him from the very fact that you are but frames made of dust. Secondly, the covenant we have been ushered into requires us to honor God as Noah did. The Redeemer is seen as redeeming, and the sinner is seen as humbly rejoicing. We are to edify and delight our souls concerning what we know about God and who God is. Worship helps us to reflect God's glory, that which we long for. It prepares the mind and the soul for action in the world. It prepares us for heaven. If you do not like worship now, you will hate heaven, (*cf.* Rev. 5). No one in heaven now thinks worship is *boring*. The Westminster Assembly's *Directory for Public Worship* says this,

> "*When* the congregation is to meet for publick worship, the people (having before prepared their hearts thereunto) ought all to come and join therein; not absenting themselves from the publick ordinance through negligence, or upon pretense of private meetings." Let all enter the assembly, not irreverently, but in a grave and seemly manner, taking our seats or places without adoration, or bowing themselves towards one place or other….The congregation being assembled, the minister, after solemn calling on them to the worshipping of the great name of God, is to begin with prayer…In all reverence and humility acknowledging the incomprehensible greatness and majesty of the Lord, (in whose presence they do then in

> a special manner appear,) and their own vileness and unworthiness to approach so near him, with their utter inability of themselves to so great a work; and humbly beseeching him for pardon, assistance, and acceptance, in the whole service then to be performed; and for a blessing on that particular portion of his word then to be read: And all in the name and mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ…The publick worship being begun, the people are wholly to attend upon it, forbearing to read any thing, except what the minister is then reading or citing; and abstaining much more from all private whisperings, conferences, salutations, or doing reverence to any person present, or coming in; as also from all gazing, sleeping, and other indecent behaviour, which may disturb the minister or people, or hinder themselves or others in the service of God… If any, through necessity, be hindered from being present at the beginning, they ought not, when they come into the congregation, to betake themselves to their private devotions, but reverently to compose themselves to join with the assembly in that ordinance of God which is then in hand."

How can worship be hindered? People worship God in a less meaningful way because they do not see God in His glory as a result of understanding His truth. People worship God in a lesser way because they offer a famished heart before God. If you have not been feeding your heart during the week do not think that Sunday is sufficient to revive it. People worship God in a lesser way because they bring an ignorant heart and mind before God. How can you worship a God you do not know? That is why prayer and worship is boring to you. You don't know anything about God.

Imagine sitting an Aborigine in front of a computer directly taken out of the wilderness where he lives? What would he know about it? How would it impact his life? It would do nothing, until, of course, someone explains it to him. You may be a *spiritual* Aborigine.

People worship God meagerly because they bring unclean hearts before God, which makes their worship unclean before God. They have not confessed their faults. Confession is important! God does not tell us to confess our sins so that He may know something He did not know before, but rather that we would receive the benefit of confessing which is *forgiveness*.

You must understand worship or you will offer vain worship to Him. The puritan Richard Baxter said, “It is lamentable to see how many turn the worship of God into vile hypocrisy and dead formality.” Jesus said in John 4:22, “You worship what you do not know.” Paul saw the idol with the inscription in Acts 17:23, “To an unknown God.” What kind of God do you serve? Who *is* the God you worship?

CHAPTER 21:
THE NOAHIC COVENANT

“And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth. 2 And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered. 3 Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things. 4 But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat. 5 And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man’s brother will I require the life of man. 6 Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man. 7 And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein. 8 And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying, 9 And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you; 10 And with every living creature that is with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you; from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth. 11 And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth. 12 And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: 13 I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. 14 And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud: 15 And I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. 16 And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth. 17 And God said unto Noah, This is the token of the covenant, which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth.” (Genesis 9:1–17).

Here we find God's initiative in making a covenant with humankind. The repetition of the commission given to Adam demonstrates that with Noah there is a new beginning, but one that required a *new* covenant as promised in Genesis 3:15. Covenant obligations come into play to demonstrate the *value* of human life. The major idea in this passage is the establishment of the *Noahic Covenant*.

From the time of Adam, God is known as a covenant–making and, now, covenant–keeping God. Naturally, this motif has bearing on subsequent covenants that God made with His people. Just like this covenant, those later covenants had stipulations for the people and promises and signs from God. In addition to covenantal concepts, this passage unfolds the continuing recreation theme with the comparison between Noah and Adam. The original design of the Creator is for blessing and commissioning humankind in the image of God. This passage alludes to the former by the use of, "be fruitful," "multiply," and "fill the earth." It also parallels the garden scene with the permission to eat any animal, but with a prohibition against eating blood.

Also, for Moses penning this, the Levitical laws are seen in the *value* of blood. The blood of an animal, according to Leviticus, *belongs to God*. Humans dare not eat it. Moreover, the blood of human beings is the *life* of the flesh. Humans *dare not spill it*, for human beings are in the image of God. For the crime of murder, then, society would have the right to take the murderer's life.

There are two parts to this passage: 9:1–7 and 9:8–17, representing the two themes of renewal for the worshipping covenant community, and covenant promises with divine protection.

God established the new order by blessing Noah, as He had done with Adam, and by instructing humankind that, rather than destroy human life, they must populate the earth and *preserve* life, (verses 1–7).

God commissions humankind to produce life, (verses 1, 7). He began the new order by blessing Noah as He had Adam and by allowing people to eat meat without blood, (verses 1–4). Noah was blessed as God's image bearer and given the same commandments, but not as a

representative for the whole earth. “Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the earth,” restates the earlier commission of Genesis 1:28. In both passages the commission is introduced by the phrase, “and God blessed,” in this way bestowing the ability to be fruitful. In verse 7, the verb, “swarm,” is added, making another allusion to the beginning, (1:20).

It would be worth noting in passing that these verbs are used in Exodus 1:7 to describe how the Israelites flourished in the land of Egypt. It is clear that in that passage Moses was portraying the people of Israel as obediently following the divine commission from God and enjoying God’s blessing.

Blessing in this case is the ability of human beings to be fruitful and multiply, (verse 1). There was also provision, in that human beings were allowed to eat of every living thing, (verses 2–3). But God instructs humankind to protect life, (verses 2–4). These are all parallels with the beginning of Genesis in the garden. God provided Noah and his descendants with food, (*cf.* 9:3 with 1:29), but now also opened *the animal world* to them for food. Humankind now lived with the reality of killing animals for food. But within the lavish provision, (“every moving thing”), there is prohibition, “only flesh with its life, its blood, you shall not eat,” (*cf.* 2:16–17). There was also prohibition from God. Human beings were not to eat animals alive, that is, with the blood in them, (verse 4). The point of the prohibition is that people may eat flesh as long as it no longer has life in it—and the blood represented the life. The text is prohibiting not simply the consumption of blood but rather the *pulsating lifeblood*.

God prohibited people from shedding human blood, for humans were made in the image of God, (verses 5–6). Any violation of the law of shedding blood would be punished by God, (verse 5). God prohibits the violation of life, (verse 5–6). There are two parts to this section: divine reprisal for any violation of the law of blood, (verse 5), and punishment for the shedding of human blood, (verse 6). That they belong together is evident from the mention of human life in both verses. God says those who violate these commands, “I will require,” something from them. The structure of verse 5 is governed by this verb *require*, “Surely your own blood will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it; and at the

hand of man and every man's brother will I require." The whole emphasis is put on the verb by this threefold repetition. The command not to kill is reformulated to express God's *absolute* lordship over every life. We learn that humankind does not have unlimited power over life just because God does. God's warnings in this section taught people to safeguard life, both in how they ate meat and in how they preserved human life on the earth.

Anyone who shed the blood of another person would be put to death, for humans were in the image of God, (verse 6). By these teachings humankind would learn that *Law* was necessary for the stability of life in the new order, that wickedness could not go unchecked as it had before. It might again attain dimensions that nothing short of a flood could correct. We see that human government was instituted in these early provisions. Israel, later, had the laws against bloodshed and eating blood more fully formulated as part of the covenant at Sinai.

God promised by, "covenant," that He would never again destroy the world with such a flood and sealed His promise with the sign of the rainbow, (verses 8–17). He promised with a covenant that He would never again destroy the world with such a flood, (verses 8–11), and to preserve His creation, (verses 8–17). The second half of the passage records making the unconditional covenant that ensures that there will not be another watery judgment like the flood. Then God sealed His covenant with the sign of the rainbow, reminding Himself and the race of the covenant promise, (verses 12–16). In this section the nature and the extent of the covenant is explained. God instituted this covenant as a gracious provision of protection for all creation. The basic point of this covenant is that God gave assurance that what He agreed to do would be done. He reiterated the sign of the covenant of peace, (verse 17), and uses a sign as a reminder of the pledge, (verses 12–17). The covenant is both *cosmic* and *universal*, as seen from the great sign, the rainbow. As it arched over the horizon after the rains, it formed an all–embracing sign of God's faithfulness to His word of grace. One theologian observes that the *bow* is the same word for the regular *battle bow*, and so it makes a vivid description of what was going on: God hung up His, "battle bow," to be a sign of peace. This sign of the covenant was to all flesh. It was a token of God's pledge to humankind. Israel would be strengthened, as would all covenanters, to see

in the skies again and again the pledge of God that He keeps His promise of grace to the human race.

In addition to the sign of the bow, it was a reminder that judgment was completed for that age. This sign of God's covenant is set within the bounds of both judgment and grace. The emblem of the bow was the sign of the covenant, serving to remind the participants to keep the stipulations. Here God, who is omniscient, would perpetually, "remind," Himself never to flood the world again. The use of, "I will remember," in verses 15 and 16 recalls the usage of the verb in 8:1, "and God *remembered* Noah." As noted earlier, the verb, "remember," is used frequently to describe God's faithfulness to His covenant promises. Within the whole context of the flood narrative, the message at the conclusion is one of peace and preservation. Yes, God would definitely judge sin, but He would also make a covenant of peace with the survivors. His covenant of peace would reign over the new era, in which humankind had the responsibility to take life seriously. Humankind is responsible to preserve life, (*i.e.,* produce and protect life), because they are regularly reminded that life is precious to God.

The covenant is based on the absolute sovereignty of Elohim: it is an unconditional arrangement, "My covenant," (9:9), extensive in nature, which applies to man and all creatures, (9:10), a divine *promise* stating that a Great Flood will never occur again, (9:11), a special sign, a natural sign, the rainbow, (9:13–14), appearing providentially, (9:13–14), visually confirming the promise, (9:15–16), with a comprehensive quality, (9:17), and an eternal duration, (9:16).

The doctrine to draw from this passage concerns the *Noahic Covenant*. "And God said: 'This is the sign of the covenant which I make between Me and you, and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations…" We know the narrative: men are wicked and wickedness is growing as a result of the fall of Adam. The earth is filled with violence. God then destroys the earth by a flood and saves Noah, his family, and the animals on the ark from the destruction. The ark rests after a period of time, and Noah comes out. God then speaks to him and makes a covenant *with who*? Most answer, "Noah." No. Look at the text again. *All*

flesh and Noah. What is the sign of the covenant here? The rainbow. People can even see the rainbow outside even today after it rains attesting to the truth of God's promise. As God did in Adam with all humanity, God again has made a covenant with both Noah, a believer, and the entire world, *including* the unbelievers. With the *Covenant of Works* with Adam as well as the *Covenant of Grace* with Noah, both believers and unbelievers are *in covenant* with God. Since covenants have internal and external dimensions to them, even unregenerate people can be in covenant with God. If people are lost, not only do they immediately take upon themselves the curses of this *Covenant of Grace*, but they make the judgment of the *Covenant of Works* greater and more catastrophic for them.

Is Noah's covenant redemptive? Or we could ask the question this way, *Does the covenant with Noah save anyone*? God makes a covenant with Noah and all flesh. It *is* a redemptive covenant, but does not *directly* save anyone, *yet*. This stage in God's covenant progression made a covenant that promises He will not destroy the earth again and the sign for that is the rainbow. It is not redemptive in a strict sense in redeeming men because a rainbow does not save unbelievers. It seems, at this point in time, to be a covenant of protection with the earth.

Divine protection is a huge theme in these last two chapters of Genesis. The covenant here with Noah and, "all flesh," is setting God's indiscriminate providence over all the earth. It is stabilizing the earth so that God has a fixed arena in which to work out His *Covenant of Redemption* in time. Paradise, the Garden of Eden, was initially that environment. But after the fall God had to stabilize the earth. Otherwise, if God became as angry as He did and enacted a flood every time the earth filled up with sin, God would be destroying the earth by water every few seconds and the covenant progression would never get off the ground, so to speak. Man would be perpetually damned. Rather, this revelation concerning the *Covenant of Grace* sets the stage for redemption to take place. In this sense it is called, "redemptive."

The Noahic covenant is universal and permanent, and cannot be altered or ended by any subsequent event while the earth remains.

Therefore, the duty of all civil governments to practice retribution, and especially to execute murderers, is universal and permanent. Noah becomes, as it were, the first head of state. This flows into a *resurrection* of the cultural mandate.

The *Cultural Mandate* is a vital expression of the Noahic Covenant; as with Adam, so now again, with Noah, the cultural mandate is to go forth into the earth and subdue it. That mandate is still in force today. As the vice–regents of God, Christians are to bring His truth and His will to bear on every sphere of the world and society. Christians are to exercise godly dominion and influence over their neighborhoods, their schools, their government, their literature and arts, their sports arenas, their entertainment media, their news media, their scientific endeavors – in short, over every aspect and intrusion of human society. God's covenant with Noah presses Christians to see they have a covenantal watershed to continue the cultural mandate. It is expressed in verse 7 with, "be fruitful and multiply." This is housed in the value of human life. So we see that this godly government, this covenantal status, will ensue in light of the flood.

There are five characteristics of the cultural mandate for covenanters: knowledge, righteousness, holiness, dominion and creativity. These ought to be employed by Christians in fulfilling their vocation God gave us in ruling over the earth (Genesis 1:26). While, "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it…for he founded it…and established it…" (Psalm 24:1–2). God has entrusted the rule of the earth to people, for, "The highest heavens belong to the Lord, but the earth he has given to man," (Psalm 115:16). People are, of course, accountable to God for how they exercise this rule over the earth, (Gen 2:16–17). But we must not think that because we do not have supreme authority, we have no authority whatsoever. The cultural mandate could then be called, as it is by some, the *stewardship vocation*: people are to steward the earth as God's image and representative.

The first two chapters of Genesis indicate that this vocation consists of four elements: first, as there is eternal fellowship among Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the Triune God, so that God says, "Let us

make man in our image," so there is to be fellowship among people, beginning with the fellowship of male and female, (Gen 1:27), between, "the man and his wife," (Gen 2:19–25). Second, as God created life, so people are to generate life, "God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth,'" (Gen 1:28). Third, as God ruled over all creation, so people, as God's image, are to subdue and rule the earth and all living things in it: "God blessed them and said to them… subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground,'" (Genesis 1:28). The force of the Hebrew words translated, *subdue* and *rule* here both convey strong, forceful *subjugation*. Although we should not read into them a harsh, careless oppression—which would be unlike God's rule over creation—we cannot escape the fact that they indicate subduing and ruling something whose impulsive tendency is to resist dominion. Fourth, as God initially planted a garden and commanded all the birds, fish, animals, and plants of the earth to be fruitful and multiply, so people were to cultivate and guard the garden, (Genesis 2:15), enhancing and maximizing its fruitfulness for God's glory and their own benefit and protecting it from the wilderness, (to the east of the garden, Genesis 3:23–24), that otherwise would impinge on it. People were, then, to guide, aid, and increase the garden's productivity, and ultimately—by transforming all the earth into a garden—the earth's productivity, and they were to guard the garden against natural degradation that might result from neglect. Clearly the purpose of the cultivation was to enable the garden, and later the earth, to meet man's needs—and the needs of other creatures as well—more fully than it naturally would.

The Westminster Shorter Catechism states in question 10, "How did God create man? A10: God created man male and female, after his own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, with dominion over the creatures, (Gen. 1:27; Col. 3:10; Eph. 4:24; Gen. 1:28)." Being able to harness your God–given abilities to the glory of God is part of that mandate.

The cultural mandate is only possible through grace in Jesus Christ. The effects of the atoning death, victorious resurrection, and triumphant ascension of Christ, sweep over all of creation, including elect

people, even animals, plants, and the ground itself. They include the restoration of the image of God in the redeemed and through them the restoration of knowledge, holiness, and creativity in working out the cultural mandate, including going forth and multiplying, subduing and ruling the earth, transforming the wilderness by cultivation into a garden, and guarding that garden against harm. The mandate, though, is systemized and set under *the Covenant of Grace*. Not only is culture arrested by the work of covenanters in the kingdom, under grace, but it is also spiritually present in the sending of harvesters for harvesting souls. Matthew 9:37–38 says, “Then He said to His disciples, “The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.”

How do you fulfill the cultural mandate for Christ? The covenant here with Noah is the ground setting stage not to be viewed primarily as soteriological, but as cultural, with Genesis 1:28 being construed as containing a, “cultural mandate,” for the human race. From the beginning of human life on earth, the human race is mandated to work toward a great future goal: the development of creation in accordance with God’s design. That development has been disrupted, but not annulled, by the fall into sin, and is reaffirmed in salvation. The goal toward which history moves is therefore not a return to the Garden of Eden, but an eschatological fulfillment of creation pictured as the New Jerusalem, into which the glory and honor of the nations will be brought, (Rev 21:26). The movement from the primordial garden to the eschatological city embraces history, and is from first to last a struggle for the display of the riches and goodness of creation. So, what are your gifts, talents and usefulness in ushering in the Kingdom?

CHAPTER 22:
HAM'S CURSE

"And the sons of Noah, that went forth of the ark, were Shem, and Ham, and Japheth: and Ham is the father of Canaan. 19 These are the three sons of Noah: and of them was the whole earth overspread. 20 And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard: 21 And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent. 22 And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without. 23 And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness. 24 And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him. 25 And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. 26 And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. 27 God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. 28 And Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years. 29 And all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years: and he died," (Genesis 9:18–29).

Moses numbers the sons of Noah, not only because he is about to pass on to the following history, but for the purpose of more fully illustrating the force of the promise, "Replenish the earth." Noah's sons are the future. They are going to become *the nations*. One theologian said, "Consistently in Genesis one finds that the fate of both people and nations is determined by occurrences with the ancestors that seem trivial and commonplace. The main characters of these stories acted on natural impulse in their own interests, but the narrator was concerned with the greater significance of their actions. Out of the virtues and vices of Noah's sons grew the virtues and vices of the families of the world."

Why does Noah, the spiritual giant of the preceding narratives, appear, now, in such a bad light? What exactly did Ham do to Noah? Who is Canaan, and why should he be cursed for something he did not do? It is

surely high praise for Noah when Moses mentions that he was *just and perfect* before God, that is, that he was full of faith and the Holy Spirit, endowed with chastity and with all good works, and pure in his worship and religion, although he had endured many temptations from the devil, from the world, and from himself. Yet he *successfully* overcame all these temptations. Such a man was Noah *before* the Flood.

Even though Moses has little to say about Noah *after* the Flood, anyone will realize that since he lived for approximately three hundred and fifty years after, such a great man could not have been inactive but was busy with the government of the church, which he alone established and ruled.

In the first place, Noah filled the office of bishop; and because he had been plagued by various temptations, it was his foremost concern to oppose the devil and comfort the tempted, to restore the erring, to give confidence to the wavering, to encourage the despairing, to shut out the impenitent from his church, and to receive back the penitent with fatherly joy. These are almost the same duties that must be performed by a pastor through the ministry of the Word.

In the second place, Noah had his civil tasks, because he established the state and formulated laws, without which human lust cannot be kept under control. In addition to this, there was the management of his own home or care for the household. Although reason tells us that after the Flood Noah was occupied with so many tasks, Moses makes mention of *none* of these. To Moses it seemed necessary to record only this one item: how he began to plant a vineyard, became drunk, and lay naked in his tent. This is indeed a silly and altogether unprofitable narrative if you compare it with the rest of Noah’s outstanding achievements through the course of so many years. If other events were recorded, they could edify people and help them arrange their lives properly. Moreover, this narrative also seems to give a cause for offense and to defend people who get drunk and then sin because of their drunkenness. What is the point?

The most significant element of this passage is the blessing and cursing, the two motifs that occur repeatedly throughout the book. Moral

issues are also presented here as the occasion for other sins. Drunkenness, nakedness, and moral abandonment are all given by the narrative. Accordingly, sobriety, modesty, and family honor are all enjoined by Moses. It is fairly easy to see that the passage essentially has the record of the event and the oracle, with the oracle being based on the event. There is also a brief prologue that introduces the family members as the ancestors of the entire human population, (verses 18–19) and a conclusion, (verses 28–29) that probably applies to the whole *tolfdot* section. The two main sections—the event and the oracle—are parallel in their organization.

First we see the *prologue*. The entire earth was populated by those who descended from Shem, Ham, and Japheth—Ham being the father of Canaan, (verses 18–19). The prologue and epilogue form important links to the context and provide background information for this narrative. The event and the oracle form the essence of this narrative. The *event* is that in response to Noah's intoxication and nakedness, Ham acted with disrespect, but Shem and Japheth acted with reverence in covering their father, (verses 20–23). Noah's behavior is given, in that after planting a vineyard, Noah became drunk and lay naked in his tent, (verses 20–21).

God's people must respond to incidents of sin with ethical purity rather than moral abandonment, (verses 20–23). The behavior of Noah after the flood provided the occasion for the violation by Ham. Noah acted so differently from before the flood that some commentators have suggested that this was some other person. The text, however, simply presents one man who had walked in righteousness with God but who planted a vineyard, became drunk, and lay naked in his tent. With the *opportunity* to start a covenanted society, unfortunately, Noah was found drunk in his tent.

Noah is described as a, "man of the soil," in verse 20. This *man of the soil* proceeded to plant a vineyard. What did Noah do that was wrong? Planting a vineyard does not seem problematic; the vine in the Bible is considered noble. The psalmist described wine as God's provision, stating that it, "gladdens the heart of man," (104:15). Judges says, "Should I give up my wine, which cheers both God and men?" (9:13). Not only did the fruit of the vine alleviate the pain of the curse of the ground, (*cf*. Gen. 5:29), but it also formed the symbol of the coming bliss in the messianic

age. Zechariah 8:12 and Isaiah 25:6, describe the future age with this motif (*cf*. the point of the turning of the water to wine in John 2 by Christ *as a sign*).

The narrative of Noah shows two degrading effects of the abuse of wine—drunkenness and nakedness. The Old Testament does not prohibit the use of wine for everyone, but it *never* excused drunkenness and nakedness. This sets the stage for the oracle of Noah. Egyptian literature attributed wine's invention to the god Osiris. The Genesis account, by contrast, reports that the beginning of wine and its effect on humans was anything but divine. It had all the *trappings of depravity*. Cursing and slavery, rather than festive joy, proceeded from its introduction into the world. The passage implies that any nation that indulges in the excessive use of wine and in nakedness is already in moral slavery.

So, we find moral abandonment in verse 22. Noah's behavior prompted the violation by Ham. Ham, whom the text identifies as the father of Canaan, "saw his father's nakedness and told his two brothers outside," (verse 22). Nakedness in the Old Testament was from the beginning a, thing of shame for fallen humankind. Adam and Eve as sinners were in a state of nakedness which was undignified and vulnerable as a result of the fall. By mentioning that Ham entered and saw his father's nakedness, the text emphasizes that this seeing was the disgusting thing. Ham's wayward looking, a moral flaw, represented the first step in the abandonment of a moral code. This violation of a boundary destroyed the honor *of Noah*. (For similar sins in this way consider Gen. 19:26; Exod. 33:20; Judg. 13:22; 1 Sam. 6:19). Ham desecrated a natural and sacred barrier. His tattling to his brothers about it without covering his father aggravated the act.

Then we have righteous conduct in verse 23. Shem and Japheth acted to *preserve* the honor of their father by covering him with the garment, (verse 23). The definiteness of the noun gives the impression that Ham completed Noah's uncovering by bringing the garment out to his brothers. The text is very careful to state that the brothers *did not see* their father's nakedness. Their approach was cautious, their backs turned to Noah with the garment on their shoulders. In contrast to the brevity of the

narrative as a whole, this verse draws out the point in great detail in order to dramatize the brothers' sensitivity and piety. The point cannot be missed—this attitude is the antithesis of Ham's sin.

God will bless the righteous but curse those who act with moral abandonment, (verses 25–27). Noah's knowledge was abrupt in waking from the wine. He learned how his youngest son had acted, Genesis 9:24, "So Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done to him." There were immediate repercussions. Ham was due for a humiliation in like manner which follows according to the principle of *talionic justice*, an *eye for an eye*. Ham made an irreparable rupture in his father's family; a curse will be put on his family.

The oracle that follows, although including blessing and cursing, is essentially a curse, for the blessing gains its meaning in contrast to the curse on Canaan. Noah said that Canaan, the son of Ham, would be cursed with abject slavery. Genesis 9:25, "Then he said: "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants He shall be to his brethren." In this passage the honor of Noah and the sanctity of the family had been treated lightly. Noah therefore pronounced the oracle of cursing; and the Lord would fulfill it.

The second half of the verse explains that slavery is the curse. It is the loss of freedom. But Noah was not content to state that Canaan would be enslaved. By using the superlative genitive, "servant of servants," he declared that it would be *the most abject slavery*. Canaan would serve his relatives, Shem and Japheth.

But who was Canaan? Moses knew and applied the oracle. Was it right to curse someone for the actions of another? The Torah does incorporate judgment from one generation to another, the sins of the fathers being visited on the children, (Exod. 20:5). But in such cases the one judged deserves to be punished (*cf.* "to those who hate me," in Exod. 20:5). A later generation may be judged for the sin of an ancestor if they are of like mind and deed. Otherwise they may simply bear the fruit of some ancestor's sin (*e.g.*, see Josh. 9:27). Even though the oracle of cursing would weigh heavily on Ham as he saw his family marred, it was directed to his distant descendants, who retained the traits.

Moses' books warned the people of the exodus about the wickedness of the Canaanites in terms that call to mind the violation of Ham, (Lev. 18:2–6). There follows a lengthy listing of such vile practices of the Canaanites, (verses 7–23), that the text must employ euphemisms to represent their deeds, ("nakedness" is used twenty–four times). Because of these sins the Canaanites were defiled and were to be driven out before the Israelites.

In contrast, the Lord, the God of Shem, would bless Shem who would be served by Canaan. Japheth would be enlarged and settle in Shem's tents, causing Canaan to serve him, (verses 26–27). The blessing is given to Shem, for God makes Himself a name in becoming the God of Shem, and in this way intertwines His name with that of Shem. Shem's advantage would be his relationship to the Lord. People living in dark debauchery without any familial respect but only aggressive pride are enslaved already by their lusts and are doomed for divine destruction. Those who want to please the divine Father should cultivate piety and reverence for the divine institutions.

Then we find a short epilogue. Noah lived 350 years after the flood and died at the age of 950 years (verses 28–29).

One of the main points here is that God will bless the righteous but curse those who live in moral neglect. But the intention of the Holy Spirit is familiar from this teaching. He wants the godly, who know their weakness and for this reason are disheartened, to take comfort in the offense that comes from the account of the lapses among the holiest and most perfect patriarchs. In such instances we should find sure proof of our own weakness and therefore bow down in humble confession, not only to ask for forgiveness but also to hope for it. This is the true theological reason why the Holy Spirit makes mention of the extraordinary lapse of this great man, although He disregards other important matters of Noah's life over 350 years. His sin was inexcusable, as is any. This caused Ham to sin as well. Martin Luther says, "So Ham did not laugh at his father because of some childish thoughtlessness, as children do when they stand around a drunken peasant in the street and make sport of him. He was actually offended by his father's fall, because he regarded himself as more

righteous, holier, and more pious than his father. We have here more than a mere appearance of offense; the very situation is an offense, because son Ham is so offended by his father's drunkenness that he passes judgment on his father and takes delight in his sin."

What kind of sin was it? A pupil like this does not rebel against his teacher unless he has first lost all due respect for his teacher. So, Ham appeared wise and holy to himself, and in his own judgment he regarded many things that his father had done as evil or foolish. This points to a heart that despises not only his parent but also the commands of God. Therefore nothing is left for the wicked son except to wait for an opportunity he could use as evidence to bring his father's foolishness to public attention. Here he does not laugh at his drunken father like a child, nor does he summon his brothers as though for some laughable sight. He wants this to be conclusive evidence that God has forsaken his father and has accepted Ham. He gleefully broadcasts this sin among other people; he is not a seven–year–old child; he is a hundred–year–old man.

God should be praised and blessed forever for dealing with His saints in a truly wonderful manner. For while He permits them to be weak and to stumble, while He lets them abound with actions that result in displeasure and offense, and the world judges and condemns them, He forgives them these weaknesses and has compassion on them. On the other hand, He leaves to Satan and utterly rejects those who are *angels* in their own eyes. The first value of this account is that the godly have the comfort they need in their weaknesses, because they see that at times even the saintliest men fell disgracefully as the result of a similar weakness.

God will curse those who act immorally. Ham was preserved from the flood, but was later cursed. Though he was preserved with the few during the Flood, he still forgets all *true religion* and *moral piety*. Still it is profitable to consider carefully how this fall happened to him. Those sins are always first come out of the inward heart.

Ham is cursed by his father, but he takes possession of the largest part of the world and establishes extensive kingdoms. On the other hand, Shem and Japheth are blessed; but if you compare them with Ham, they and their descendants are actually beggars in comparison to the world.

How, then, can this prophecy of enslavement be true? My answer is: this prophecy and all others, whether they are promises or threats, are beyond the grasp of reason and understandable solely by faith; for God delays both the punishments and the rewards. Therefore perseverance is needed. “For he who endures unto the end will be saved,” as Christ says in Matt. 24:13.

The whole life of the godly is one of faith and hope. If one were to take reason or the achievements and the examples of the world into account, they all stand for the opposite. Ham is cursed, and yet he alone becomes a lord; Shem and Japheth are blessed, but they alone bear the curses and are afflicted in various ways.

The Holy Spirit’s great wrath is exhibited in this passage when it states about Ham, “He shall be a slave of slaves,” that is, the lowest and most abject slave. If you consult history, however, you will see that he rules in Canaan, but that Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and other descendants who had the blessing live like servants among the Canaanites. Furthermore, since the Egyptians are the descendants of Ham, with what pitiful servitude Israel is oppressed in that country! How, then, is it true that Ham is cursed and Shem is blessed? Evidently in this way, that the fulfillment of the divine promise and threat would be a matter of waiting. The delay occurs in order that the ungodly may fill their cup and God cannot be accused of not giving an opportunity for repentance. While the godly are oppressed by the ungodly and actually serve those who are their servants, they go through trials and training for the purpose of increasing their faith and love toward God. They are to be disciplined through many vexations and tribulations; and only after they have been disciplined, may they at last attain the promise. For when the time was fulfilled, it was impossible for Ham’s descendants to be powerful enough to avoid yielding to the descendants of Shem. Then was fulfilled the curse that Ham and all his descendants had regarded with arrogant contempt and unbelief for so long.

We ought, therefore, to remind ourselves how important practical considerations occur from passages like these, no matter how *short* they might be. The first is to respect our elders. Moses shows Ham as a horrible example that should be carefully impressed in the church, in order that

young people may learn to respect their elders, the magistrates, and their parents. This account is not recorded for Noah's sake or for Ham's sake; it is recorded for the sake of their descendants and of every one of us. Ham, the despiser of God and of his father, is depicted in the most hideous way. Disobedience toward parents is, therefore, a clear indication of an impending curse and disaster; likewise also contempt for the office of the ministry and the government. When people in the ancient world began to deride the patriarchs and to despise their authority, *the Flood followed*. When among the people of Judah a child began to be insolent against an old person, as Isa. 3:5 shows, Jerusalem fell, *and* Judah collapsed.

The decline of morals is the surest indication of approaching ruin. How shall we apply this to America? It seems like America is prospering! The procedure of divine justice is this, that the godly should have a kingdom, but in faith, and should be satisfied with the spiritual blessing that they have a reconciled God and a sure hope of the kingdom of heaven. Meanwhile they should leave the possession of the kingdoms of the world to the ungodly until God scatters them even physically, but appoints us heirs of all things through Christ. In this passage Moses expresses the same idea when he declares, "Blessed be the Lord God of Shem;" for this means that the blessing is nowhere except where the God of Shem is.

This is an outstanding promise. It remains in force until the end of the world. But just as we said that it applies only to those who have the God of Shem, or to those who believe, so the curse, too, applies only to those who continue in the ungodliness of Ham. For since Noah is not speaking these words as a human being or on his own authority and reason, but through the Spirit of God, he is speaking not merely of a temporal curse but of a spiritual and eternal one. Moreover, the curse must be understood as applying not only before the world but before God.

Secondly, may we *never* gloat over the offenses of others. Here, when we see saints fall, let us not be immediately offended. Much less we ought not to gloat over the weakness of other people, or rejoice, as though *we* were stronger, wiser, and holier. Rather let us bear with and cover, and even extenuate and excuse, such mistakes as much as we can, bearing in mind that what the other person has experienced today we may perhaps

experience tomorrow. Paul said, “he who stands should take heed lest he fall,” (1 Cor. 10:12). “Charity shall cover the multitude of sins,” (1 Peter 4:8).

This is the way Ham’s brothers looked upon their drunken parent. They thought, “Behold, our father has fallen.” But God deals in a wonderful way with His saints. Sometimes He lets them fall for our comfort, lest we despair when we are overcome by a similar weakness. The sins of other people do not give us the power to judge them. They stand and fall for their own Lord, (Rom. 14:4).

Thirdly, be on guard. Furthermore, if the downfall of others displeases us—since many actions surely neither should nor can be excused—let us be on our guard all the more diligently, lest something of the same sort happen to us; but let us not judge proudly and presumptuously. We are indeed weak sinners, and we readily confess that since we are human our behavior is not always free of offense. But although we have this fault in common with our opponents, we diligently do our duty by planting the Word of God, teaching the churches, correcting defects, exhorting to what is right, comforting the weak, and whatever else is called for by the ministry that God has committed to us. But all these real achievements Moses passes by and does not touch on them with a single word. This one fact he records: how Noah became drunk and was ridiculed by his younger son, as an outstanding example from which the godly may learn to trust in God’s mercy. On the other hand, the proud, the would–be religious, and the sanctimonious should learn to fear God and refrain from rashly judging others. For God is wonderful in His dealings with His saints, as repentant King Manasseh says, and God is terrible, “against the ungodly and sinners,” (as recorded in the apocryphal book of the *Proverbs of Manasseh*, 5). This the example of Ham shows; this was not the first time he went astray, but he nourished this hatred against his father for a long time and later on filled the world with idolatry.

CHAPTER 23:
THE TABLE OF NATIONS

“Now these are the generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth: and unto them were sons born after the flood.” (Read Genesis 10:1–32).

When we arrive at Genesis chapter 10, there is a primary question that the genealogy serves to answer, *Is there hope*? The reader is left with the people of the earth hopelessly scattered across the face of the earth, divided from one another and from God. What will happen next? The context here is important. This chapter serves well as a prequel, than sequel. It is informing us what *has* happened, and when we arrive at chapter 11 it will explain *how* it happened. Noah’s oracle of blessing and cursing in the last chapter tells us *why* it was important to identify the surrounding nations; but the actual account of the dispersion at Babel tells us *how* the nations came to be scattered and divided.

All the nations came from one man, Noah. But they were not all like him. In Genesis, as we have seen, patterns written into the text are important. We have here a pattern where we find the arrangement of the table into three groups, headed by Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Some names on the list are clearly designated as places: Babylon, Erech, Akkad, Calneh, Shinar, Asshur, Nineveh, Rehoboth, Calah, and Resen, (verses 10–12). Other names are listed without being clearly designated as geographical locations although usage suggests they are. Sidon, (verse 15), normally represents the city in Phoenicia. Magog, (verse 2), is also called the land of Gog. Tarshish, Elishah, Corner, Meshech, Havilah, and Sheba, (verses 2, 4, 28–29), are all known as locations in the Bible. The names in this way include tribes, cities, inhabitants of those cities, and countries, along with various individuals. The title announced the passage to be the *genealogy of Noah*; the summary describes the results. The table is not concerned with a simple list of the sons of the ancestors; rather, it is concerned with tracing, “what became of,” these sons. And so we have tribes, languages, nations, and lands.

Genesis 10 is a structured arrangement of the important nations of the primeval world. The writer clearly is emphasizing the development of those nations that were of primary importance to Israel within the overall structure of the table.

The chapter is an outline of the genealogies that come from Noah. Without repeating all of them in turn, the reader can notice some important points. Allen P. Ross in his work on Genesis gives this breakdown of the tribes: The descendants of Japheth settled in the north and west and became the founders of the Greek and Scythian tribes, (verses 2–5). The descendants of Ham settled in the area of Egypt and Canaan, and from these tribes came the founders of the great cities of the east, (verses 6–20). Nimrod founded the great cities of the east, (verses 8–12). The descendants of Mizraim were the tribes of northern Africa, (verses 13–14). Canaan produced the Canaanite tribes in the land promised to Israel, (verses 15–20). The descendants of Shem, the ancestor of Eber, settled in the eastern lands and in the region of the Persian Gulf, (verses 21–31). The descendants of Shem were Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud, and Aram, (verses 21—22). The descendants formed the major tribes of the eastern gulf regions, (verses 23–31). And so it concludes with showing the reader that these were the divisions of the nations, (verse 32).

What doctrine might we pull from a chapter on genealogies? The human race, although united by origin, is divided by language, territory, and politics through *vanity*. They are *united* by virtue of its beginnings from one family. People say that there are races of people on the earth, in a nation, in a city or even in various smaller communities. But the human race is really *all one family*. All men are descended from Noah. Why then are there the blackest blacks, the most Oriental or Orientals, the most Caucasian of Caucasians, *etc*.? The reason is *sin*. The human race is hopelessly divided by language, territory, and politics, all of which raise the question of the *cause* for such division. The answer to that is *sin* – specifically of *self–righteousness*. The reader must recall what Noah said to Ham. He was cursed with division, slavery, of hopelessness and apostasy. Such is the opposite of unity. We will see this more clearly in chapter 24.

Collective apostasy is epitomized in Nimrod. Nimrod took possession of the highest point of honor and became a hero to the people of sorts. We don't hear of Noah's good works here, but of Nimrod's self–love and boasting in the city he founded. He is infamous as a result. It says he *was a hunter for food*. Calvin, in his commentary on Genesis, remarks that its either Nimrod was a superior hunter, or that the text describes that euphemistically, that Moses is trying to tell us that he violently seized his prey. Nimrod, in any case, is set up as a furious man, likened to beasts more than man, and set against him. The expression, "before the Lord," is not a good one, but a *boast*, as if Nimrod tried to raise himself up high. Such was the case with the devil. Vain self–confidence is the great sin worked into the lives of men. Nimrod's empire surrounded Babel, his center, and even other great wicked cities like Nineveh. Two of the most evil groups of rebellious sinners ever to set foot on God's earth, Babylon and Nineveh, were both founded by self–love. The truth of this will be vividly seen in the self–exaltation of his *Tower* in Genesis 11.

The largest nations of the world, then, are bound up in spiritual slavery to their own self–flatteries and self–righteousness. Collectively, under the forced labor of Nimrod, the world was thrown into *spiritual rebellion*.

No hope comes from powerful nations warring against one another; hope comes only from the sovereign Lord who controls the nations, and who will move nations to make room for His chosen people. The divided nations all stand in some relation to the divine plan for blessing and cursing, as witnessed by the oracle of Noah and the deliberate emphases within the table. God so orders the path of men, that even where they live and work are sovereignly set by His providence. Numbers 34:12 says, "This shall be your land with its surrounding boundaries." Deuteronomy 32:8 explains, "When the Most High divided their inheritance to the nations, When He separated the sons of Adam, He set the boundaries of the peoples According to the number of the children of Israel." Acts 17:26 states, "And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings…" We have the

underlying basic supposition in Proverbs 16:9, “A man’s heart plans his way, But the LORD directs his steps.”

The *talents* of men are set by God in industry. Exodus 28:3 says, “So you shall speak to all who are gifted artisans, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom…” Exodus 36:2, “Then Moses called Bezalel and Aholiab, and every gifted artisan in whose heart the LORD had put wisdom, everyone whose heart was stirred, to come and do the work.” And so, Genesis 10:32, “These were the families of the sons of Noah, according to their generations, in their nations; and from these the nations were divided on the earth after the flood.” God *controls* the nations to bring about His larger plan in the inauguration of the coming Redeemer. That is the practical application of every genealogy you find in Scripture. That is why the commentary Moses gives in Genesis 10:1 is, “*after* the flood.” Men are *constantly* reminded of rebellion, and its affects, but God is always working towards His glorious end.

What will happen next? Genealogies are listed to aid the reader in transitions to what will happen next – that God is sovereignly working out His plan to bring about the Redeemer. Remember, Noah’s father said that Noah would *be rest*. Noah points to the rest that we find in Jesus Christ.

Also make note, that the nations are exalted for a time, but their glory is transient and vanishing. Some might think that upon first look, God created the world *for* great nations. Nimrod certainly did. Sinners will go about their lives believing that they need to leave their mark, their accomplishments, their testimonies, as if they can flatter themselves without ever answering for their actions. Deuteronomy 29:19 says, “…and so it may not happen, when he hears the words of this curse, that he blesses himself in his heart, saying, ‘I shall have peace, even though I follow the dictates of my heart’ – as though the drunkard could be included with the sober.” Maybe Nimrod thought this was all there is, this earthly travail? Maybe he so suppressed the truth of God, though Noah was *alive* at the time, that he gained more press than Noah did. But God allows the world to flourish to be an example of His Sovereign power to bring about that which will be permanent. This world is divided by those who fill their belly, and those who fill their spirit. Filling the belly only

satisfies the passions *temporarily*. Nimrod was not content with one house, or one street, or one town, or one city, or one country. He was not even content with being human. He wanted to be *divine*. It's no wonder that people go and visit on vacation the *achievements of man* – like the Great Pyramids, which are a testimony to Ham's curse, and Nimrod's self–righteous vanity. But the rock on those buildings are worn out, and in time, they will wear out completely. Such things are *not* permanent.

The transient life is all the debased mind has passions for, and all he desires. But the Christian must make a conscious effort to separate himself from the temporary and fleeting, and hold onto that which is eternal.

In the midst of a divided world, the covenanted community is bound together by God's providence through Jesus Christ. Yes, it is a divided world. The people of God, until the end of the age, will live in this division and among wicked men. Until the return of Christ, or our death, we live among wicked men. All around us we see the effects of man's vanity and sin. In much the same way as Lot, our souls are vexed from the wickedness of the world, as he looked on in Sodom. We are supposed to be preservatives, witnesses to the realities of God's promises of *rest in Him.* Rest from sin will come, yet not until the end. We are in the world but not of it. This presses us to find commonality among God's people and plan, and be satisfied with the eternal aspects of our salvation, not the temporary fixes of happiness that the world offers.

The mind of the Christian must be bound to the eternal blessedness which comes from being united with Jesus Christ. It is within the covenanted community of God's people that such unity occurs. God brings His people together, from being scattered, which is the entire point of the *reversal* of the Tower of Babel seen in Acts 2, and which Moses gives us a taste in this genealogy.

The covenant community is bound together by God's providence. The redemptive answer to sin is found in the genealogical line of God's chosen people in Christ. Abraham is going to be chosen from among, what? He will be chosen from among the nations, so the covenant community should not become alarmed that so many nations cover the

earth. Abraham was a Gentile. But there is hope in God's plan of choosing him among the scattered people of the world. God's redemptive plan is *worked out* in the midst of the rebellion of the nations. The readers of Moses' Genesis narrative would have questions of *hope* due to the division of the nations. 2 Peter 3:9 says that even in the times of the Apostles, such questions were raised, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." God promised to enlarge Japheth's lands, and so He did, and so much that He ordered history for the coming of Christ. The nations are in the hands of God. God's promises are sure. But they are worked out in God's time and on His timetable. Romans 15:8 says, "Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers…" 2 Corinthians 1:20 states, "For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us." The covenant community relies on the Kingship of Christ and His work for daily sustenance and spiritual power; they do not look after the escapades of men. You either have Nimrod as a hero, or Christ as a hero. Nimrod was a public, heroic figure, and people followed him. And in imitating their hero, the nations followed Nimrod into rebellion, instead of Japheth, Shem and Noah into righteousness. Who do you wish to emulate, and who are your heroes?

The covenant community comes together to unite under the banner of the Kingship of Christ's spiritual kingdom that will one day be set in the midst of the physical. It's not that Christ is not ruling and reigning now – He is. It is that He will one day mix the physical and spiritual so as to renew the earth again by fire and bring all things we see under His visible rule for all eternity. There will be no more Nimrods in those days jockeying for position. There will be no more vain self–flattery of the wicked. And all God providentially set in motion will be fulfilled.

Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of everything God promised the patriarchs, and the fulfillment of everything God worked out providentially through the rebellious nations. Matthew 1:22 says, "So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying…" Mark 1:15 says, "The time is fulfilled, and

the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel." Luke 1:1 directs us, "Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us…" And John 19:36 states, "For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled." Really, then, the heart of the Genesis passage is to comfort the reader to know, that even in the midst of the nation's rising up and rebelling against God, even in the midst of the wickedness of Egypt, Canaan, Babel and Nineveh, God is in control and ordering His plan until the fulfillment of the ages occurs.

There is hope in Christ amidst the turmoil of the nations. Men divide against one another, but Christ unites His people. How will all these things wind up according to Moses? The hope set out in the genealogies and in the covenant fulfillment is what our eyes should focus on. Hope, then, is, as defined, "expectation of fulfillment or success." Moses knew God is faithful and that He will bring to pass all that He promised in Genesis 9. How patient are you to wait on the promises of God to be realized in your own life?

CHAPTER 24:
THE TOWER OF BABEL

"And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. 2 And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there. 3 And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them throughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for morter. 4 And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. 5 And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. 6 And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. 7 Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. 8 So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. 9 Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth," (Genesis 11:1–9).

Man was striving for unity, security, and social immortality, (making a name), in defiance of God's desire for them to fill the earth. Note, that the *tower* is not as important in judgment as the language; the tower was not *destroyed*. Language was destroyed instead. Since the people's purpose was to make a name for themselves and to achieve power through unity, the apostasy of the human spirit would shortly bring the race to the brink of another catastrophe like the flood. Instead God frustrated their communication and divided them into nations.

The building of the tower in Gen. 11 is interpreted as an act of human arrogance and rebellion against God; accordingly, God intervenes against its builders and scatters them over the whole earth. This action of God is both punishment and a preventive measure; it prevents men from going too far in their pride. All the earth had *one* language, (verse 1). God

confused the language of the whole earth, (verse 9). The phrase, “Let us make bricks,” is paralleled to, “Let us confuse.” God is a God of reversals. The construction on earth is answered by the destruction from heaven; men build up, but God pulls down. When the human race settled together to preserve their unity and develop their fame by building a grandiose city–tower, the Lord interrupted their collective apostasy and scattered them across the face of the earth by confusing the language that united them.

Consider first, the human race was united by one language, (verse 1). The narrative begins with a comment, and a smirk of sorts; one language, one unified attempt, which will come to nothing.

The people migrated to, and settled in, Shinar’s fertile valley, (verse 2). Migrating to the land of Shinar, the people resolved to build a magnificent city and tower to preserve their identity and their unity, (verses 2–4). Babylon was a thing of beauty to the pagan world. Every important city of Babylonia was built with a step–tower known as a *ziggurat,* a pyramid like structure that raised high into the heavens. Moses, having become familiar with the vain self–flattery in the words and traditions of Babylonian literature, weaves his account for the purpose of deriding the literary traditions of that ancient city and establishing the truth. Babylon was the prototype of all nations, cities, and empires that raise themselves in pride. They would be brought down in confusion; this was a warning to the new nation of Israel: any disobedient nation would be abased and brought low in spite of her pride, ingenuity, and strength. This account provides a profound and lasting example of such a judgment on *ambitious pride*. Moses records this event for a warning to the new nation of Israel: God will subjugate the proud who rebel against His will. Nothing short of *dispersion across the face of the earth* would await a people who refused to obey God.

These followers of Nimrod resolved to make bricks out of the materials available to them, (verse 3). The resolve of the people comes in two stages: in verse 3, they made bricks, and in verse 4, motivated by their initial success, they moved to a grander scale by building a city with a tower. “Come, let us build…” Couched in the same grammatical

construction as the preceding resolve to make bricks, their words indicate that they would use the materials made to build a city, "with a tower." Once built, this tower would provide the pattern for fortresses for others. Building it with its top in the heavens may reflect the bold spirit of the workers, even though it is hyperbolic language used to express their own corrupted security.

Then we find their ambition. They resolved to develop a tower–city to make a name for *themselves* and to *prevent* scattering, (verse 4). They wished to preserve their name, (4a). They did not want to be scattered abroad, (4b). Ambition and fear motivate pride, (4). The purpose of their building venture was fame. They wished to find security by arrogantly *making a name*. The basic characteristics of their culture are seen here. They had underlying anxiety, (the fear of being separated and disconnected), and the desire for fame, (a sense of security in a powerful reputation).

Then, we find the Lord *descended* to investigate their building (verse 5). God will not permit proud rebellious acts to succeed and so He intervenes. Investigating the innovativeness of the human race and knowing the dangerous potential of their unified pride, the Lord confounded their speech and scattered them across the earth, (verses 5–8).

It's with a smirk Moses writes that God investigates the activities of *arrogant mortals*, (verse 5). The description, written very anthropomorphically, describes the Lord's close interest and participation in human affairs. He did not need *to come down to look at their work*—in fact, his coming down implies prior knowledge. The point clearly is that the tower that was to reach the heavens fell exceedingly short. God had to *descend* to see them, when they thought they were *ascending*. The purpose of His coming down was *to see* the work. This is the second anthropomorphic expression in the line and announces that He will closely investigate the city. The narrative is *filled with condescension*.

In referring to them as "sons of the earth", He shows them to be *earthlings*. This view strikes at the heart of the Babylonian literature, which credited the work of building cities to the Anurmaki gods, the

spacemen of *Ancient Aliens* on the *History Channel*? According to *Genesis*, the work was terrestrial, not celestial.

Knowing their success was dangerously evil, the Lord resolved to scatter them across the face of the earth, (verses 6–8). With this account the common history of all humankind comes to an abrupt end, as the human race is hopelessly scattered across the face of the entire earth. This fact makes the present narrative so different from those preceding it. In each previous *judgment* there was a gracious provision for hope, but in this judgment *there is none*. It does not offer a token of grace, a promise of any blessing, a hope of salvation, or a way of escape. There are no fig leaves or animal skins for the naked sinner, no protective mark on their forehead for the fugitive, and no rainbow in the foreboding sky. The primeval age *ends* with a judgmental scattering and with *complete confusion*. The blessing is not here; the world must await *a new history*.

The Lord concluded that nothing would be withheld from their designs if they are left to themselves, (verse 6). As a result, the Lord resolved to destroy their unity, (verse 7). God knows the danger of collective apostasy, (verses 6–7). Verse 6 records the results of that investigation, “And the LORD said, ‘If as one people all having one language they have begun to act this way, now nothing that they propose to do will be out of their reach.” Link this with Genesis 3:22, and the idea becomes vivid. “Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever.” The potential for *utter calamity* is dangerous to the race, and God *will* prevent it. Continuing to speak, the Lord says, “Come, let us go down and confound their language so that they cannot understand one another.” The second verb describes the actual purpose, “let us *confound*.” This confusion led to the diversity of their understanding in different languages and to their dispersion.

Once their understanding of one another was confounded, the division would be effected. The Lord scattered them across the face of the earth so that their scheme ceased, (verse 8). God *casts off* the expectations of such pride. “So the LORD scattered them from there across the face of

the whole earth, and they ceased building the city." Their greatest fear, (remember verse 4), came on them. The place of unity became the place of dispersion. Their view was toward centrality, but God moved them universally apart. The rebellious, unified people did not fulfill their goal.

We find the human race was disunited and scattered by the Lord's making *a babble* of their one language at *Babel*, (verse 9). In a very clever word play, verse 9 announces, "Therefore its name is called Babel, because there the LORD confused the lip (*language*) of all the earth and scattered them across the face of the whole earth." The word *babal*, "confusion", is the proud Babylonians' name. The narrative shows how this gate of the gods fell far short of expectations, ending in confusion and, spiritual chaos.

The Nations were dispersed due to their rebellion, pride and apostasy in uniting at Babel. It teaches that all nations that rebel will be dispersed. The text demonstrates that the present number of languages that form national barriers is a witness to sin. It was at Babel: that city founded by Nimrod, that city known for its pride and vanity; that seat of rebellion toward the true God and pagan worship of the false gods—that the Lord turned ingenuity and ambition into chaos and confusion so that the thing the people feared most came on them and that their desire to be people of renown was suddenly turned against them.

Those who are prideful resist God, and rebel against King Jesus. For the Christian, the lesson is very clear – if Christians profess to be Christians, they must obey God's will, for the covenanted community that thrives on pride and refuses to obey will be scattered from among the people of God. The account of the scattering at Babel has a theological significance for God's people. *Those who exalt themselves shall be abased.* Matthew 23:12 says, "And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." God demonstrates his sovereignty over the *silly little plans of foolish mortals*, turning their rebellion into submission to His will. Those who humble themselves in this way before God, God will exalt; but those who exalt themselves, God will abase.

The context shows that rebellion is deep seated in fallen man. Jeremiah 17:9 says, "The heart is deceitful above all things and

desperately wicked, who can know it?" Genesis 11 is the *epitome* of such prideful rebellion against God. It wasn't that the fall had infected just a few, but we see the *whole* of the people conspiring against God. All they wanted was personal glory. Calvin says, "This is the perpetual infatuation of the world; to neglect heaven, and to seek immortality on earth, where everything is fading away." They *encouraged* one another to evil work.

But now, God is long–suffering towards humanity for His own purposes. He scatters them instead of instantaneously destroying them, which they *deserved*. Man deserves to be cast into outer darkness forever and ever where there is weeping and the gnashing of teeth. Where the worm does not die and the fire is not quenched. Man deserves *another* flood. But because of God's mercy, and the care He has for His covenant people, He is long–suffering towards the earth and the rebellion upon it. The *Tower of Babel* was not new. Adam, Cain, Lamech, and Ham all sought their own way for their own purpose and their own agenda long before the tower was even constructed. The tower was simply a gathering of rebellion *together*. This time it was a *group effort*.

Man is no different in his pride today, as it was in Israel, Judges 21:25, "…and everyone did what was right in their own eyes." What does God do today? Does He come with impending judgment? Why does He *not* come? People asked that same question in 2 Peter 3:9. Why doesn't He destroy all these *Towers of Babel* now? The reason, God is still gathering in His people. That is why He was long–suffering towards them in Genesis 11. You and I would not be saved if God had judged them *finally*. Zephaniah 3:9–11 says, "For at that time I will change the speech of the peoples to a pure speech, that all of them may call upon the name of the LORD and serve him with one accord. From beyond the rivers of Cush my worshipers, the daughter of my dispersed ones, shall bring my offering. On that day you shall not be put to shame because of the deeds by which you have rebelled against me; for then I will remove from your midst your proudly exultant ones, and you shall no longer be haughty in my holy mountain." Final Judgment does await, but only after Christ is finished reigning over the wicked hearts of men to turn His elect from darkness to light. He will lose none that the Father gives Him. *All* the nations shall be gathered before Christ in the last day, (Matthew 25:31–32).

These rebellious people following Nimrod did not listen to God's Word and they were all rejected. Awful things befall people when they do not heed the Word of God; ignorance being *the greatest judgment*. God does not allow wicked men to come to know Him savingly, and sometimes only very darkly. If we do not listen to God's Word then the conclusion is that we do what *we* want. Question 1 in the *Westminster Shorter Catechism* asks, "What is the chief end of man? Answer 1: Man's chief end is to glorify *God*, and to enjoy *Him* for ever." Is this your aim?

When one surveys the various nations on the earth, they see men glorying in *their* achievements in themselves instead of God. The tower was to reach, "into the heavens." But no matter how high they built the tower, no matter how much work they tried to make a name for themselves and seek out their own high pride and glory, no matter how much work was put into it, the glorious God must descend to see what earthlings are doing in order to judge them for their sin. Rejecting God's word is rejecting *God*. Hosea 4:6, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because you have rejected knowledge, I reject you from being a priest to me. And since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children." These are *still* promises today!

There is a necessity of submissive obedience to Christ the King and the Word of God. The surrender of the Christian mind and heart to God is continued daily in sanctification. It is *necessary* to salvation. There must be an entire submission to His will, a steady and strong determination to obey the commandments of Christ, renunciation of the world as the chief good, which are all fruits of belief on the Lord Jesus Christ. These, though, cannot occur before the one thing needful: to cast the soul humbly and penitently upon the atoning work of King Jesus. He who has believed on the Lord Jesus Christ finds that in so doing his heart has already been arrested by the power of Christ the King. As theologian W.G.T. Shedd said, "But he who attempts to give his heart to God, before he has believed on the Son of God, is attempting an impossibility." One is either a rebellious person who does not heed the Word, or in submissive obedience to Christ's word. King Jesus says Luke 6:46, "But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say?" This was the

exact opposite of those of the Tower. The builders did not care what God said, and instead, followed their own evil dictates in deep seated rebellion. In essence, God *excommunicated* them in the dispersion, and from among them took *one man* to create a nation. The narrative of that man will be for another volume.

Take a lesson from the Babylonians in two ways. Take a lesson from their apostasy. Reject the word of God and God will reject you. A professing Christian is only as good as God's grace and the demonstration of his profession. The builders had a problem with authority. At the time, the word of God was *orally* transmitted by Noah. Still, they had a problem with what was known because God's word did not fit into their plans. They had a problem with knowing *what* God said, and *what* God meant. These builders were not known for inquiring about the Word. They were known for their apostasy, for turning away from the truth, *after* they heard the truth and knew the history of Noah.

People hate God's word today as much as Nimrod did. They hate it because their minds are darkened. They hate it especially if they cannot accommodate it to *their* lusts and desires. They love to advance their own false religion because it makes them feel better. Ignorance and unbelief are the two chief reasons for the apostasy of the Babylonians, and all men who reject God's word.

Take another lesson from encouraging one another as God's children in the truth. We must be sure to encourage one another in the truth, "as it is in Jesus." Ephesians 4:20–24, "But you have not so learned Christ, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness." How can a man be a Christian and not learn about Christ? How could he not be interested as to what Habakkuk says about Christ, or 1 Chronicles, or Romans? Encouragement aids us in being a kind of reassurance, support, and assistance from God's word. The Old Testament definition of *encouragement* meant that truth was communicated almost as a reproach

but with great love and mercy. Deut. 1:38 says, “Joshua, the son of Nun, who stands before you, he shall go in there. Encourage him for he shall cause Israel to inherit it.” Deut. 3:28 says again, “But command Joshua and encourage him and strengthen him...” Job 16:5 states, “But I would strengthen you with my mouth and the comfort of my lips would relieve your grief.” In the New Testament the word *parakaleo*, to exhort, admonish, to do something, is to spur people on to good works! Acts 15:31–32 says, “They rejoiced over the letter...” The Jerusalem decree admonished them and gave them instruction. In Romans 12:8 it says, “he who encourages, encourage...” This is even a spiritual gift no less! Tychius, mentioned in Ephesians 6:22 and Colossians 4:8, is mentioned *twice in regard to encouraging people*. 1 Thess. 5:11 states, “Therefore, encourage each other and edify one another just as you are also doing.” How often are Christians to do this? Hebrews 3:13 says, “Encourage one another daily...” It is no wonder the Holy Spirit is called the *Paraklete* – the Comforter or Encourager. “And the Holy Spirit, whom the Father shall send in My name, shall teach you all things and remind you of everything I have said to you.” The doctrine tells us that, the church must encourage and spur one another to good works so that they may come to know Jesus Christ in a deeper relationship and be biblically unified. As good works are accomplished according to the will of God we grow in grace. Each of us should have rallied around us a host of spiritual coaches who spur us on to victory.

Encouragement in the church is often neglected. One of the biggest sins in the church today is the neglect of encouragement in the body of Christ. As a body we need to encourage one another daily. You can always see a hearty and sincere Christian – he *loves* the Word. He is taught by it, rebuked by it, admonished by it, and exhorted by it. Romans 15:14, “Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.” A healthy body needs encouragement from one another. One of Satan’s most devastating and subtle tactics against the church is to turn the community of worshipping believers into a *society of individuals*. In contrast, Nimrod’s society was a society of individuals banded together under wicked intentions to serve their pride.

Why is encouragement neglected? Think it through, how do you know anyone cares about anyone else if you don't talk with them? Are we *afraid* of developing relationships? Are we afraid of allowing other people to find out who we really are? In essence, encouragement is a form of *accountability*. How can someone encourage without knowing what to encourage others about? People become offended when others tell them how to live their lives; and this is true, *unless* Christians exhort one another through the *Words of Christ* in unity of mind. Do you?

CHAPTER 25:
A CONCLUDING THOUGHT

Where did the universe come from? What was God doing before the universe was created? Why did God create anything? How do truths about creation impact theology? Who were the first people? Why do we die? What is sin? How does understanding original sin impact our view of the Bible? Why did God destroy the world with a flood? Where did the nations come from? There are literally hundreds of questions that could be posed here just from the first 11 chapters of the book of Genesis. How much have you learned about *primeval history*? And how has Genesis helped you to apply just some of the truths gleaned from this sacred book to other parts of biblical theology? Is Genesis important? I hope you would give that question a resounding *yes*. Take out Adam and Eve and you have immense theological problems that utterly destroy the rest of the Bible, including much of what Christ taught concerning salvation and sin.

The book of Genesis does not end in chapter 11. As a matter of fact, it is almost a strange place for *this* book to end. But then, where would the next book begin? There is more than enough material to have subsequent volumes on Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. As it is with primeval history, the beginning of beginnings, so it is equally important in studying these later patriarchs and their lives, such as Abraham as *the father of the Christian faith*, (Rom. 4:11). We will do this in subsequent works.

In thinking about the *purpose* of this work, we conclude with the thought that this volume was intended to keep major themes in the book *practical* to you, the reader, rather than being a giant commentary that could easily have been twice the size with verbiage that made study more technical. Rather, my aim was keeping it simple, and drawing out points that every Christian should hold dear concerning God, His plan, and ultimately His Son. Hopefully you have taken something away from Genesis that strengthened your faith, and brought you closer to Christ.

May the Lord bless you as you continue to study *Primeval His*tory with an eye to seeing your need for Christ more clearly.

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[1] In the first few foundational chapters we will expand the bounds of primeval history to include other Scriptural references. This is to aid the reader with a basis for theological reflection.

[2] בְּרֵאשִׁית (Gen. 1:1), meaning *what is first, beginning*. It also has connotations of a *starting-point with a reference to time*.

[3] We look at this idea more in depth later.

[4] It is also called aseity.

[5] This phrase is used 6 times in Genesis.

[6] Compare Genesis 46:2, “Then God spoke to Israel in the visions of the night, and said, “Jacob, Jacob!” And he said, “Here I am.”

[7] *cf.* Romans 9.

[8] There is more to this instance than simply that one point, but we will see that later.

[9] Romans 3:21-26, “But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.”

[10] *A Treatise of the Covenant of Grace*. London, 1645, pages 14-15.

[11] You will not find in the bible the word “trinity.” But not finding the phrase or word does not mean the concept is wrong.

[12] “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in

him: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory," (Eph. 1:3-14).

[13] There are many differences between Adam's experience in the garden and the experience of believers in heaven. We will look at these as we consider the *Covenant of Works* later in chapter 12.

[14] This was a system or variety of sacrificial religious worship instituted by God.

[15] *e.g.*, Genesis 12:7-8; 13:4; 18; 26:25; 35:3-7.

[16] Genesis 32:32, "Therefore to this day the children of Israel do not eat the muscle that shrank, which is on the hip socket, because He touched the socket of Jacob's hip in the muscle that shrank."

[17] See the law in Leviticus 12-19, it represents the same in Genesis.

[18] Called the Mishpatim.

[19] See his excellent work, *The Excellency of Holy Courage in Evil Times*.

[20] "I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light," (Jer. 4:23). "But the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it; the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it: and he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness," (Isa. 34:11).

[21] This seems to be supported by verses 29-30, which attest to only two kinds: *plants and trees*.

[22] This was the *setting* for the Messiah to come into the world.

[23] This should be a cause for all Christians to treat their covenant children *like* covenant children, and not treat them as they would a heathen. Eve presumed Cain was elect until he demonstrated otherwise.

[24] *Comfortable Walking with God*, page 30.

[25] A wonderful book on God's continued testing of His people's faith is Thomas Mockett's "The Christian's Troubles and Deliverance by God."

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